Daar al Falastini

Home, family and identity among Palestinians in Britain

Joanna Claire Long

Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD in Geography

Queen Mary, University of London

January 2011

I hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

SIGNED

Joanna Long

ABSTRACT

What do home, family and identity mean for diasporic populations? What kinds of practices, relationships and spaces are involved in making these things come alive on an everyday basis? What does an understanding of this contribute to discourses of Palestinian identity in particular and scholarship on diasporic identity more broadly? These questions are central to this thesis, which is based on qualitative research interviewing Palestinians in family groups and as individuals in their own houses. My findings are discussed in three parts. The first explores notions of *al beit* (house) and the practices that bring domestic spaces to life. I argue that physical living spaces are enrolled in family practices of identity but that both Arab/Palestinian family life and British domestic space adapt in the process. The second part explores the geographies of Palestinian families, how people negotiate these through everyday practices and how migration has precipitated a re-imagination of family and a reworking of family relationships. The third part explores the dynamics of social groups and collective identity, including the multiple identities and the range of ideas and conversational practices through which Palestinian social relatedness is enacted. I argue that the loss of family proximity can create opportunities for new kinds of meaningful relationships but that family remains an important coordinate for social relations through which historical family geographies of Palestine are reproduced. Examining the convergence of house, family and collective identity in this way is crucial to understanding the lives of diasporic Palestinians, as it reveals the everyday processes through which hegemonic constructions of Palestinian-ness are imagined, challenged and (re)produced. More broadly, this thesis advances the case for an integrated approach to the study of home, family and identity in diasporic contexts as a means of constructing a richer portrait of what it means to 'be diasporic'.

CONTENTS

TABLES AND FIGURES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to all the participants in this research for sharing their thoughts and experiences, for being so generous with their time, and for making the whole research process such a pleasure. I am also grateful to those who facilitated this research by kindly forwarding my appeals for participants to their friends and acquaintances. I am indebted to Sarah, Pete, Des and Marie for allowing me to stay with them, often at short-notice, during my various research trips, and to Caron Lipman for her invaluable advice about dictaphones. I would like to say a very big 'thank you' to my friends and family for their support throughout the whole process, particularly Felicity for helping me to keep my feet on the ground and Shelley for the music that took my feet off it. Special praise is reserved for Ian, Marcin, Przemek, Raúl and Martin who contributed more than they know and more than I can express to my wellbeing and sanity over the past two years. Finally, this thesis and the work behind it would not have been possible without the guidance, support, understanding, flexibility, commentary and encouragement of my supervisors, Alison and Catherine. Thank you both for everything.

1 AN INTRODUCTION

Alifa: I don't know if it's to do with the Israeli occupation [*inaudible*] – the other Islamic countries, they do have different accents but they're not so varied – but in Palestine you just pop from one village to another and it's just completely different. The way they pronounce different letters is just-

Ilyas: in a small geographical area the diversity not only in ethnic origins but also in accents and dialects and the use of language- of course it's all based on Arabic language, however, the way-, even they mock, you know, they [mock] each other because it's so different. […]

Ibrahim: we sometimes call it the city accent and the village accent or the farmer's accent

Ilyas: or the peasant accent

[*Laughter*]

Alifa: no, farmer

Ibrahim: I prefer farmer's accent

[*Laughter*]

Alifa: like they would call my husband a farmer and I would say to him, although he says he has farmed, I think you can't really call yourself a farmer.

Ibrahim: […] how come you say 'you farmed' and you don't want to call me a- how do you define then a farmer?

Ilyas: the one who has a farmer's accent!!

[*Laughter*]

Alifa: he did for a while because […] his mum and dad were banned from working because of political reasons and for that small period of time they lived off farming but really they were teachers. So how can you call teachers farmers?

Ibrahim: you can be- you can be both. You are making it a bit complicated, you can do both things at the same time. […]

Ilyas: the concept of a farmer in Europe, especially in the UK, if you are a farmer you are rich, you are high class, you know. It's the other- well it's not now but in the past you look, a farmer he's the poorer guy who works on the land or

Alifa: a bit uneducated

Ilyas: but it's just a joke, it's not really- but you know the accents, coming back to accents and dialects, […] [the] diversity from the north of Palestine to the south of Palestine, it's unbelievable […] I think you can do very many PhDs on this.

[*Laughter*]

This is an edited extract from a group interview conducted with the Haniyyah family in the summer of 2008. I have chosen to open with this scene because it signals some of the key themes and debates I will explore in this thesis, as well as some of the methodological and ethical concerns that underpin it. Prominent here are the contested politics of individual and collective identity. Ibrahim lays claim to the identity of 'farmer' and dismisses Alifa's argument that his parents were 'actually' teachers, asserting instead that it is possible to occupy both positions (and both identities) simultaneously. Their debate about accents also highlights the way in which a specifically Palestinian identity connects with and differs from other identities (Islamic and Arabic) and how these selective overlaps open up a range of possibilities for group belonging that include but also exceed Palestine. In a related sense, however, the extract also points towards issues around belonging and diasporic life, particularly the way in which belonging to a Palestinian collectivity is at least partly about positioning oneself (or being positioned) within a social hierarchy and of negotiating the politics that go along with that positioning. In the process, the very existence of a well-established and structurally-developed Palestinian society is asserted based on the remarkable diversity of accents, although Ilyas later went on to explain how these are shifting in the context of diasporic life.

These issues around diasporic identity have much to do with the variously contested relationships between individuals and groups such as 'family', 'community' and 'nationality'. How did Ibrahim come to personally identify as a farmer? How does this connect with his parents' engagement in farming and his after-school participation, and what part might have been played by nationalist imagery of Palestinians bonded to the land through having worked it? The ways in which people navigate such questions around their identity positions in relation to others will be a key focus of this thesis. At the same time, the range of spaces in and through which individuality and collectivity are negotiated need to be drawn out in order to understand what these might mean for a sense of 'home' in diasporic contexts. Nation and homeland have already been mentioned and allusions have also been made to the 'diaspora space' of participants' lives, but questions remain about how other, more

intimate, material, everyday spaces figure within processes of Palestinian identity-formation.

This thesis will explore the production of diasporic identities among Palestinians in Britain through the lenses of domestic space, family relationships and social groups. In the process, I will demonstrate the interrelatedness of home, family and identity, as indicated in the title, *daar al Falastini*. Literally meaning 'house of the Palestinians', *daar al Falastini* emphasises relationships between domestic space and kinship (that is, between literal and metaphorical 'houses') while also invoking relationships between home, place and family that figure significantly in Palestinian social relatedness. My aim is to articulate how diasporic Palestinian identities are partly constituted by social meanings of house, home and family that are deeply rooted in particular places and intensified across diasporic contexts.

In this chapter, I will set out key tenets of Palestinian identity as they are presented in political and academic discourses and as they are being problematised by dispersal. I then broadly introduce existing literature around diasporic Palestinians, highlighting my concerns with this work and how I address them in my own research. This is followed by an outline of the thesis and brief elaboration of how key issues and arguments will be explored.

Four narratives

Rashid Khalidi's (1997) *Palestinian Identity* is a key text within English-language literature on Palestinians. In this book he argues that Palestinian identity operates through multiple, overlapping loyalties to Palestine, the Ottoman Empire, Arabism, cities and regions, as well as family and locality. Although this multiplicity of identities is well established among post-structural scholars of identity (Gilroy 1997; Hall 1996), it remains difficult to reconcile with 'ahistorical' and 'unidimensional' models of national identity based on Western European experience (see Anderson 1991). Khalidi thus argues that while a contemporary Frenchwoman would be determined '*primarily* in terms of her identification with the French nation', it is normal for Palestinians to identify '*primarily* as an Arab in one context, as a Muslim or a Christian in another, as a Nabulsi or Jaffan in yet another, and as a Palestinian in a

fourth' (Khalidi 1997, 146 original emphasis). Furthermore, the lack of a state apparatus, such as a unified education system, through which to promulgate historical narratives of Palestinian-ness means that Palestinians articulating identity tend instead to refer to 'a number of "historical" narratives, each carrying a different valence and somewhat different message' (ibid.). Drawing on Khalidi's work and wider literature on Palestinians and Palestinian identity, I suggest that there are four key narratives at work.

The first narrative concerns Jerusalem, which occupies a hallowed position within Palestinian imaginaries of homeland partly as a result of the ideological and political attention it has attracted over many hundreds of years, as well as through its significance within Islam and, to a lesser extent, Christianity. From a very early stage the inhabitants of Jerusalem and its environs developed a keen sense of the specificity of their city and the wider 'Holy Land' through the territorial and political designs of incomers such as the Crusaders and later the Ottomans. Moreover, the position of Jerusalem's al-Haram al-Sharif (the Dome of the Rock) as the third-holiest site in Islam after Mecca and Medina gives the city special meaning for the predominantly Muslim Palestinian population as part of a wider religious geography of the Arab world. Competing Jewish-Zionist claims to the Temple Mount and the Western Wall (upon which al-Haram al-Sharif was built) have reignited struggles over Jerusalem, particularly since Israel took control of the city during the 1967 war (Khalidi 1997). On a more practical level, Jerusalem was also part of a local 'axis of political power' running through the hill towns of Palestine and although its regional political importance varied under Ottoman rule, imperial reforms in the second half of the nineteenth century meant that the city acquired greater administrative significance (see Doumani 1995).

The second major narrative in discourses of Palestinian identity is *al Nakba*, 'the catastrophe'. In November 1947, after decades of increasing tension between Palestinians and Zionist settlers within the British Mandatory territory of Palestine, the UN proposed partitioning the country into a Jewish and an Arab state. War immediately broke out and, when the British withdrew in May the following year, Zionist leaders declared the establishment of the State of Israel (Hirst 2003). By the

time the war ended in early 1949, Israel had seized roughly half of the territory allocated to the Palestinians in the UN Partition Plan and an estimated seven hundred thousand Palestinians had fled their houses and lands for safety in neighbouring countries or in Arab-majority parts of Palestine (Morris 1987; 2004). For many authors, this event was a unifying experience for Palestinians and was also a great leveller of Palestinian society since so many people, wealthy and poor alike, lost everything (Khalidi 1997; see also Karmi 2002). Indeed, the importance of this event as a point of historical reference and as a baseline for more personal narratives is evidenced in the way that Palestinian time is organised into 'before the *Nakba*' and 'after the *Nakba*,' and people are sorted into pre-*Nakba*, *Nakba* and post-*Nakba* generations (Sa'di and Abu Lughod 2007). The centrality of the *Nakba* to Palestinian experience is the reason why literature on Palestinians frequently begins with a synopsis of what it involved, which risks reproducing this narrative at the expense of different experiences and ambivalent identifications with Palestine, Palestinian identity and *al Nakba*.

The third narrative in discourses of Palestinian identity operates through the romanticised trope of 'peasants and the land,' enabling claims to 'intimacy with the soil' and therefore incontrovertible belonging (Turki 1981; 1998). These claims are part of an emotive geography of 'rootedness' in Palestine, which renders identity as both singular and sedentary, and glosses over class differences and prejudices within Palestinian society between elite, educated families, the urban, mercantile middle classes and the rural peasantry (Doumani 1995; Malkki 1992). However, this identity narrative remains potent partly due to the political urgency of claiming such rootedness in the face of arguments that the Palestinians are Arabs and can therefore live anywhere in the Arab world (Khalidi 1997). However, the enduring importance of this narrative of 'landhood' (Turki 1981) is also attributable to the political and symbolic power of peasant iconography, particularly embroidered clothing, which became evident in the 'cultural turn' in Palestinian resistance after the demise of the first *intifada*[1] (1987-1993) and widespread disillusionment with the subsequent peace process. As a living tradition, embroidery constitutes material 'evidence' of centuries-

[1] Palestinian uprising

old Palestinian culture, thus bolstering Palestinian land claims on the basis of this historic presence as well as recalling a quiet, bucolic, equable (mythical) past before Zionist settlement (Moors 2000). Given that embroidered clothing was historically made and worn by women, this identity-narrative corresponds with national discourses confining women to roles such as the symbolic mother of nation and literal mother of the resistance, which is the fourth narrative of Palestinian identity.

Developing out of the first *intifada*, this narrative casts it as women's political responsibility to produce children to join the demographic fight against Israel and to reproduce (male) fighters for the *intifada*. In turn, men's responsibilities are 'to protect, defend and sustain home and family' in the course of which beatings by Israeli soldiers and imprisonment by the Israeli authorities are considered a rite of passage (Peteet 1997, 107; see also Khalili 2007; Peteet 1994). In practice, however, women were far from passive (re)producers of the nation during the *intifada*. Some were reported to be collecting rocks for their sons to throw at tanks. Stories also circulated of women thrusting their babies into strangers' arms in order to save them from arrest or of harbouring unrelated men in their homes to protect them from Israeli forces (Amireh 2003; Haj 1992; Strum 1998). In this way, women's 'traditional' domestic roles, as mothers, carers and supporters, were mobilised and manipulated for the political struggle and their domestic activities were politicised through the modification of traditional peasant dress to include the Palestinian flag and embroidered slogans (Sherwell 1996; see also Hage 1996; Thapar-Bjorkert 1997).

To sum up, these four narratives articulate Palestinian identity in terms of place-based belonging in a nationalised homeland, which can be organised into a neat historical sequence: Palestinians have worked the land of Palestine for centuries and are therefore incontrovertibly rooted within this and no other homeland; Palestinians suffered wholesale uprooting during *al Nakba* and this common experience structures personal, collective and national identities; Palestinians will continue indefinitely and indefatigably their struggle to (re)claim sovereignty over this ancestral homeland; and Jerusalem will be the capital of this future Palestinian state. Whilst the political importance of these narratives is undeniable, particularly in the face of such a powerful ideological opponent as Zionism, they are problematic in two interrelated ways.

Firstly, centralising 'the land of Palestine' obscures differences and multiplicities in the meanings of home and belonging among diasporic Palestinians (who now constitute the majority of the Palestinian population). Secondly, these identity discourses prioritise the imagined Palestinian nation as the only valid form of collective belonging among Palestinians, which dismisses other geographies and relationships through which Palestinians around the world create a sense of their place in that world. In both of these things, this discourse betrays the very complexity of Palestinian/Arab identity processes (in which religion, empire, nation, region, city, village and family can operate simultaneously) in favour of simplified, Western notions of identity and is therefore complicit in denying Palestinians' 'permission to narrate' their own lives (Said 1984).

Diasporic possibilities

Focusing on diasporic Palestinians presents an opportunity to problematise, complicate and diversify understandings of Palestinian identity, and to situate expanded Palestinian geographies within various lines of political, economic and postcolonial mobility. Such a project is assisted by the smallness of the Palestinian population, both historically and diasporically. In 1948 Palestine, their numbers were estimated to be around one million (Morris 2004). It is difficult to assess the contemporary size of the Palestinian population because as a result of *al Nakba* most carry passports and travel documents from countries other than Palestine. However, in June 2009 the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) estimated that there were over 4.7 million registered refugees in their camps (www.un.org/unrwa). Also, approximately 2.1 million Palestinians live within Israel (Rabinowitz 2000) and another two million are estimated to live elsewhere in diaspora (Mason 2007). This puts the contemporary global Palestinian population at roughly 8.8 million.

English-language scholarly attention to Palestinians in diaspora began to appear in the late 1970s and early 1980s, led by Rosemary Sayigh's work with refugees in Lebanon (1977; 1978) and Pamela Ann Smith's (1984; 1986) more general efforts to grasp the locations, communities, and social and economic lives of dispersed Palestinians. In particular, Sayigh's nuanced attention to Palestinian life in the specific

geographical, economic and social space of Lebanese refugee camps has inspired in subsequent researchers a similar appreciation for the situatedness of diasporic Palestinian lives. Other parts of this literature, however, fall into the homogenising trap described above by seeking out common characteristics that prove the existence of an entity called 'the Palestinian diaspora'. Even Khalidi's insightful analysis begins with a description of the 'quintessential Palestinian experience' of purposeless detention and repetitive questions meted out to Palestinians not just at checkpoints within the Occupied Palestinian Territories, but at international borders around the world (1997, 1-6). Helena Lindholm Schulz (2003) conceptualises identity as similarly revolving around these border experiences as well as around *al Nakba*. She argues that this event and the perpetual displacement that it has precipitated provide the core of what it means to be Palestinian: a rootless 'exile condition […] a condition of "wandering" and unwanted "mobility"' (2003, 86).

What these notions of diasporic Palestinian identity ignore is the way in which places and senses of placement feature within experiences of diaspora and exile (see Brah 1996; Pratt 2003). In terms of *al Nakba*, these placements can be thought of as the multifarious positions from which this event is experienced, remembered and relived; positions arrived at through migration histories (influenced by class, economics and family) and situated within particular constellations of socio-economic, political, gendered and generational forces (Sayigh in Nofal et al 1998). To recognise this diversity is not to dismiss the possibility of a shared 'Palestinian identity' nor to seek commonality through difference itself, but rather to argue that being Palestinian means different things to different people, and that the way Palestinian identities are practised depends on the histories and geographies of particular lives.

Several authors do appreciate these issues and have attempted to demonstrate the contested and contingent ways in which Palestinians cultivate senses of home in diaspora (Abdulhadi 2003; Gibb and Rothenberg 2000; Karmi 2002; Ramadan 2009). Julianne Hammer's work is particularly important as she probes the fissures within the geographical imaginations, historical knowledges and linguistic demands that exist in diasporic Palestinian identities but are often glossed over in hegemonic discourses. In her book *Palestinians Born in Exile: Diaspora and the Search for a Homeland* (2005),

based on research with Palestinians born in the Arab world and the United States, Hammer elaborates the problematic politics of identity for generations growing up outside Palestine without assuming a linear relationship between physical absence and alienation from Palestine. Instead she recognises the ebb and flow of Palestinian consciousness in diaspora and the important material, cultural processes of memory and re-memory that keep Palestine alive, even when those who lived there have passed away (see Tolia-Kelly 2004a). Drawing on candid interview data, she focuses on participants' upbringing in different parts of the world and their feelings about being 'fed' dominant Palestinian identity discourses. One participant describes her parents' descriptions of a romanticised Palestine as:

> The most beautiful country in the world, and it's got everything you need in a country, and it's got the tallest mountains and the bluest sea, and it's got the most velvety grass and blah, blah, blah. And fertile. And everybody is the most educated, it is the most educated Arab country in the Middle East, and they are the best, most honourable, most noble people (Sandy quoted in Hammer 2005, 69).

These impossible imaginaries would be exposed upon visiting Palestine and being confronted with the realities of life there, at which point some participants felt angry towards their parents for misleading them. In centralising the gaps between representations and experiences of Palestine, discourse and practice, Hammer emphasises the emotional consequences of homogenising homeland narratives for people's senses of attachment, identity and belonging in relation to Palestine. Hammer also foregrounds the context of participants' upbringing when exploring their relationship with Palestinian memory narratives and linguistic and cultural practices. For example, Palestinians born in the United States tended to rely for their historical knowledge on texts by key Palestinian authors and poets, whereas those raised in the Arab world, particularly within Palestinian clusters, were exposed to stories, pictures and memories of Palestine from family and friends. Similarly with language, those raised in the United States might be fluent in colloquial Arabic among their family but struggle to understand news media and books written in modern standard Arabic, whereas those raised in Egypt would be able to switch effortlessly between Palestinian, Egyptian and modern standard Arabic, which connects them to wider geographies of Palestinian-Arabic identity.

Another author dealing sensitively with the contested and contingent ways in which Palestinians cultivate senses of home and identity in diaspora is Elizabeth Mavroudi. Through her work with Palestinians in Athens (2005; 2007; 2008; 2010) she has explored the strategic possibilities of citizenship as separate from national identity, the politics of home, belonging and hybridity, and the management of difference in constructions of 'community' and shared consciousness. In doing so, Mavroudi brings together political work, emotional attachment and multiple senses of belonging to demonstrate the complexities and nuances in what it means to Palestinian in a diasporic context. On citizenship, Mavroudi demonstrates the irony for Palestinians that they must be citizens of somewhere else in order to visit Palestine, as Israel will not allow entry to those carrying refugee travel documents and creates problems for those with Palestinian identity cards. Some diasporic Palestinians therefore deliberately seek 'strategic' citizenships from European countries or the United States in order to be able to 'return home'. This problematises assumed relationships between citizenship and national belonging and highlights how diasporic identities challenge political constructions of Palestinian identity as uniform, timeless and acquired at birth, and shows it to be more ambivalent, hesitant and complex (Mavroudi 2005; 2008).

This should not be read as an argument for 'hybridity', which Mavroudi regards as of questionable viability for Palestinians, since these ambivalences exist in perpetual tension with the political need to assert a Palestinian unity along the four narrative lines outlined above. Indeed, she investigates the ways in which homogenising and exclusive notions of identity are produced in diasporic contexts and how the apparent stability of such identity narratives is the product of active, iterative processes of teaching and learning one's own Palestinian-ness (Mavroudi 2007). These tensions are further pursued in her discussion of how Palestinians in Athens construct collective identity and a sense of community (Mavroudi 2010). Here she aims to highlight how sameness and difference are negotiated in the production of a 'shared consciousness' and in the interests of political mobilisation, although her findings seem to suggest that difference is less negotiated than temporarily ignored. Also, comparing her invocation

of the term 'community' with her participants' avoidance of it imposes a cohesiveness that she herself is attempting to deconstruct.

A pervasive danger here, and indeed with any work aiming to problematise dominant discourses of Palestinian identity, is the potential for any complexity to be subsumed by the politicised interpretations of homeland and nation that authors seek to challenge. Mavroudi's focus on political activism, for example, constantly returns her careful appreciation of Palestinian identity to mainstream narratives of homeland and belonging, albeit for politically strategic reasons. Hammer also conflates 'Palestinian identity' with 'national consciousness,' which centralises a certain scale and mode of identification at the expense of more dispersed, multiple and possibly contradictory attachments. Greater attention is therefore required to how Palestinian identity selectively intersects with other identities and how this creates possibilities for different kinds of group belonging that may include but also exceed Palestine.

Palestinians in Britain

Much research on diasporic Palestinians remains centred on those living in Israel and the Occupied Territories (see *Journal of Palestine Studies*). However, there is a small but growing body of literature that ventures beyond the Middle East to explore the lives of Palestinians in other parts of the Arab World and Europe (Brand 1988; Hanafi 2005; Shiblak 2005a) and in specific cities, notably Athens, Sydney, Berlin and Toronto (Abdulrahim 1996; Cox and Connell 2003; Gibb and Rothenberg 2000; Mavroudi 2007). Less research has been conducted on Palestinians in Latin America and the United States and in some instances what has already been written about Palestinians in other parts of the world requires more critical inquiry. This is particularly the case with respect to Britain, where Palestinians constitute a sizeable yet poorly-understood population and whose contemporary presence can be traced through the (post)colonial history of Britain in the Middle East.

In the early twentieth century, the British Mandatory government increased educational and professional lines of mobility for Palestinians wishing to come to Britain. Students took advantage of scholarships to British universities whilst others found employment in the BBC Arabic service in London. As the Mandatory

government began to crumble during the 1940s, Palestinian civil servants were offered refuge in Britain and citizenship, and others used contacts in the administration to set themselves up in the UK when it became clear that they could not return to Palestine (Anabtawi 1986; Ansari 2004; Karmi 2002; Smith 1984). After the 1967 War, many Palestinian residents who were temporarily working or studying in Britain found themselves stranded as Israel declared them 'foreign residents' and barred them from returning under anything but a temporary, visitor's visa. During the 1970s, Palestinian entrepreneur and business communities migrated to Europe, Britain in particular, as well as the United States, as safe havens for investment. Engineers, doctors, teachers and other professionals soon followed (Shiblak 2005b).

Some research has sought to explore the Palestinian population in Britain by providing an account of Palestinian community organisations, and their political and social activities (Mahmoud 2005). However, the emphasis here on leading figures and dominant Palestinian political discourses suggests a coherent Palestinian 'community' in Britain and explains little about how these discourses might be contested across the UK Palestinian population and within everyday life and practices. My earlier research (Long 2006) has explored the political work of one particular group of Palestinians in Britain (students), demonstrating not only the necessity of situating such work within financial and cultural lines of mobility, and frameworks of citizenship, but also the need to engage with embodied practices of politics and their implications for individual identity and subjectivity. However, this research focused on international students from the Occupied Palestinian Territories and the Arab world and did not engage with the political practices of Palestinians born or based more permanently in Britain. Other research has concentrated specifically on British Palestinians to explore the role of media in cultivating community belonging (Matar 2005; 2006). This work focused on communal practices of watching and listening to Arabic and English television and radio news, and the place of current events in Palestine within discussions among Palestinian friends and family members. In the process, Matar not only demonstrated the importance of everyday practice to diasporic senses of belonging but also explored how meta-narratives of Palestinian identity (centred on political events in the

'homeland') are interpreted by people from different socio-economic and migratory backgrounds.

More work needs to be done in order to more fully understand the complex daily practices and processes of identity among Palestinians in diaspora in general and in Britain in particular. That work should not only be situated within the geographical and historical context of the UK, but also within the socio-cultural context of Palestinian life and the various local, regional, national and international relationships of community. It should problematise notions of a monolithic Palestinian 'identity' and taken-for-granted ideas about 'home' and 'homeland' by paying attention to the practices of relatedness through and across space, including the reproduction and/or contestation of dominant discourses of identity.

Outline

This thesis aims to challenge dominant constructions of Palestinian identity by paying attention to the differences and multiplicities in the meanings of home, family and identity among diasporic Palestinians. This thesis also examines the myriad geographies and relationships through which Palestinians around the world create a sense of their place in that world and through which collective identities are constructed that may include but also go beyond the nation. I address these issues by concentrating on the dynamics of family, home and identity among Palestinians in Britain as they relate to and play out within ideas, practices, feelings and experiences of house, dispersed kinship and social groups. Space is central to this discussion, particularly how material domestic spaces figure within mundane processes of Palestinian identity-formation and how these relate to wider familial, social geographies of belonging. I also discuss a range of ways in which people position themselves and are positioned by others according to established modes of identification and with varying degrees of willingness. Family is a key coordinate here, alongside overlapping Palestinian, Arab and Muslim cultures. Conventional political narratives of nation and homeland will have their place, too, but in relation to grounded experiences of diasporic life and more inclusive networks of political solidarity.

The process of exploring these conceptual issues is assisted by speaking to several members of a family as a group. Even in the short extract cited at the start of this chapter it is clear how opinions differ, how certain views and claims are challenged, defended and debated, and how opinions are collaboratively formed. These dynamics arose time and again in group interviews with different families and provided invaluable insight into one, quite intimate scale at which individual and group identities are negotiated, including the politics of agreement and difference as well as the power relations at work in such negotiations.

These arguments will be made across five chapters. Chapter two explores key debates around the conceptualisation of diaspora and identity, connecting these to research on house/home, family and social groups. In doing so, I explore how ideas, practices and feelings about domestic space, kinship and community intersect with constructions and experiences of home, homeland and identity in diasporic contexts. Chapter three explains the methodological rationale and process of conducting research among Palestinians in Britain, from its theoretical foundations, through the research design, to the specificities of working with families as groups in their own houses and the politics of participant representation.

The next three chapters explore the dynamics of house, family and collective identities, respectively. Chapter four examines participants' experiences of and ideas about the houses in which they have lived, and the practices that bring these spaces to life in particular ways. In doing so, this chapter considers how physical domestic spaces shape family practices, and how these feature in the (re)production of identities among Palestinians in Britain. Chapter five concerns the varied and complex geographies of participants' families and how people negotiate these geographies through everyday family practices. In particular it investigates the changing meanings and geographies of participants' families across distances, as well as the spaces and practices through which participants produce and maintain feelings of relatedness in a diasporic context. Finally, chapter six examines the dynamics of social groups and collective identity among Palestinians in Britain, particularly the overlaps and fissures between multiple identities and the wider range of ideas, feelings and practices through which group belonging is forged. This chapter seeks to challenge

constructions of diasporic Palestinians as localised communities and engages instead with how Palestinian social relatedness is enacted and the implications of this for notions of place-based identity and collective belonging.

These three chapters should not be read as discrete entities but as specific emphases of a broader, cumulative argument in which house and home, familial and social relatedness, personal and collective identities are continuously cross-cutting. My aim throughout is to promote a greater diversity of perspectives than is normally heard within Palestinian national discourse and reveal wider possibilities for imagining, practising and debating Palestinian identity. More broadly, I argue for an integrated understanding of diasporic life in which home, family and identity are approached from multiple perspectives simultaneously: domestic spaces and material cultures *in conjunction with* dispersed emotional relationships and notions of place-based belonging; practices of diasporic relatedness *in concert with* ideals and practices of domestic family intimacy, collective and place-based identity; conventional narratives of home and homeland *partnered with* other spaces, practices and feelings of home.

In the next chapter I outline this approach in more detail by exploring intersecting literatures on house/home, relatedness and collective identities. Specifically, I engage with debates on spatialised imaginaries of home and material domestic cultures, considering how these contribute to understandings of diasporic dwelling. I also engage with debates around cultures of kinship and relatedness and the politics of family and place both within Palestinian society and in wider diasporic contexts. Finally, I explore the dynamics of social group construction and the importance of nation, family and home to collective identities, as well as engaging with debates around 'community' in diasporic contexts. In the process, I demonstrate the importance of approaching diasporic lives through everyday spaces, practices and relationships, and of approaching diasporic identities as interplays of stability and fluidity, in which established values and expectations operate through and against individual perspectives, at the same time as being challenged and reworked by them.

2 APPROACHING DIASPORIC LIVES

This chapter explores the key literatures and debates relevant to this thesis. It begins by discussing conceptualisations and critiques of diaspora and identity, and by exploring how I approach diasporic identity. In the remaining three sections I address the three key themes of house/home, family and social groups in turn, discussing in particular how ideas, practices and feelings about domestic space, kinship and 'community' intersect with constructions and experiences of home and identity in diasporic contexts. The three research questions guiding this thesis correspond with the themes of house/home, family and social groups. I therefore introduce these questions individually in the course of my discussion, before a fuller summary and discussion at the end of the chapter.

Diaspora and identity

Theoretical and empirical writings around diaspora within the social sciences and humanities have proliferated in recent years, largely because it is such a rich and expressive heuristic device. In the process, this ever-expanding literature has succeeded in de-capitalising and democratising the term to include 'new diasporas' beyond its Jewish, Greek and Armenian antecedents (Cohen 1997; Van Hear 1998). However, this democratisation has also generated problems around the definition of diaspora to the point that its persistent redefinition is itself eroding the term's usefulness (Brubaker 2005; Wagner forthcoming). Much of the debate over definition concerns the processes by which populations have come to be dispersed and how these populations construct and maintain ideas and feelings about their 'homeland' (Butler 2001; Sheffer 1986). Iliya Harik's conceptualisation of 'modern diasporas', for example, is of 'ethnic minority groups of migrant origins residing and acting in host countries but maintaining strong sentimental and material links with their countries of origin – their homelands' (paraphrased by Sheffer 1986, 3). From this he concludes that Palestinians do not qualify as a diaspora because they are war refugees, not migrants;

they are not always a minority group (for example, in Jordan); they are not ethnically distinct from 'host' populations in the Arab world; and their hostile relationship with the State of Israel means that they do not maintain material connections with their 'land of origin' (Harik 1986, 316). This ignores the fact that Palestinians are migrants, forced out by the occupation and intolerable economic circumstances, *as well as* war refugees. It also assumes that the State of Israel is the Palestinian 'land of origin', which implies an equivalence between the shared territoriality of contemporary Israel and historic Palestine and the emotional, material and imaginative links to 'homeland'.[2]

These tendencies to diminish the diversity of Palestinian experiences and geographical attachments are also present in writings that support Palestinian claims to diaspora status. As discussed in chapter one, authors sometimes seek out common characteristics or quintessential experiences to prove the existence of 'The Palestinian Diaspora' as a coherent entity and, by extension, assert the existence and validity of a Palestinian identity and the right to nation-state autonomy. Such approaches to diaspora risk conflating too great a diversity of paths and experiences to be conceptually or even descriptively useful. Moreover, the material and imaginative *connections* between a dispersed population and their purported homeland – the ways people have of 'being diasporic' – are reduced to evidence of diaspora status rather than important in themselves. More productive conceptualisations of diaspora take it as a heuristic device rather than a descriptive category (Fortier 2000), and as bound up with issues of geography, history, identity and mobility that encompass 'the contested interplay of place, home, culture and identity through migration and resettlement' (Blunt 2005a, 10). Diaspora in this sense is an 'outer-national term', a means of unshackling identity from territoriality and registering instead 'the constitutive potency of space, spatiality, distance, travel and itinerancy in human sciences that had been premised upon time, temporality, fixity, rootedness and the sedentary' (Gilroy 1994, 207; see also Malkki 1992).

[2] It is worth noting that the phrase '1948 Palestine' (or just '48) is often used by Palestinians and activists to refer to the areas of Palestine that became part of the State of Israel in 1948. It is both a way of asserting historic Palestinian belonging and a way of referring to and connecting with places within Israel without conveying a connection with or recognition of Israel itself.

In a similar vein, James Clifford (1997) urges scholars to 'track' the 'routes' of diaspora as a 'travelling term', rather than trace its 'roots' in the hope of constructing and policing a definitive model of it. Such tracking involves attention to how diaspora as a term is 'translated and adopted' by different populations, travelling and hybridizing with the increasing diversity of dispersed people (Clifford 1997, 250). These travels and hybridizations need to be understood within their political, economic and cultural contexts if diasporic identities (and our analyses) are to avoid being recuperated by dominant discourses of culture and capitalism (Mitchell 1997). Moreover, tracking diaspora's travels should not focus exclusively on movement and displacement because the processes of 'arriving' and 'settling in' are equally important aspects of diasporic experience (Brah 1996).

Gender is a crucial factor here, as processes of 'placing' are often associated with women, whose 'place' is often thought to be in the home and whose responsibility it is to *make* home, in both domestic and national senses (Blunt 2005a; Kaplan 2002). Moreover, paying attention to context in the way Katharyne Mitchell suggests helps to reveal the ways in which patriarchy operates within migration and in debates around it. On this point, Bronwen Walter (2001) argues that the frequent denial of women's agency in diaspora histories and patriarchal discourses comes down to the inadmissibility of their power as material and symbolic sustainers of diaspora communities and 'host' societies. Drawing on diasporic Irish women's experiences, Walter demonstrates the significance of women's (largely domestic) labour to sustaining those 'back home' in Ireland as well as in enabling and perpetuating dominant discourses in their country of residence, particularly the cult of domesticity in Britain. By focusing on women as agents of diaspora, Walter disrupts ideas about travel as the preserve of men and the privileging of male-dominated political organising as the marker of diasporic community (c.f. Mahmoud 2005). Instead, she demonstrates how integral women's public and private labours and behaviours were and are to the production and maintenance of Irish diasporic identities.

There is also a question of masculinism in the very term 'diaspora', due to the etymological ties between the Greek words for scattering of sperm and the sowing of seeds (Helmreich 1993). How much this matters depends on the extent to which the

gendered grammar of 'diaspora', much like the racial grammar of 'hybridity', 'can be demonstrated to have unacceptable consequences' (Kalra et al 2005, 73; Young 1995). It also depends on the price of one's loyalty to the Greek origins of the word 'diaspora' itself, at the expense of terms in other languages to describe similar phenomena. In Arabic, *al shatat* is used to discuss the scattering, dispersal or separation of a people. This is a relatively new word, possibly an adaptation of 'diaspora'. A more common term with a much longer linguistic history is *al ghourba*, which describes 'absence from the homeland; separation from one's native country, banishment, exile; life, or place, away from home' and conjures philosophical and religious notions of 'darkness' and the West, where one is barred from the light of God (Hammer 2005, 60). Although it is not clear what other etymological baggage *al ghourba* and *al shatat* carry, or their grammatical gender, it is nevertheless interesting to note that in Arabic the physical dispersal of people is articulated separately from the emotional and spiritual experience of being dispersed, an experience which is characterised primarily as lack (see Zerubavel 1995, 14-22).

Identity as a concept and a lived experience is central to discourses of diaspora and the cultural theorists Paul Gilroy and Stuart Hall have been crucial in coming to terms with these in the context of migration. For Gilroy, identity 'provides a way of understanding the interplay between our subjective experience of the world and the cultural and historical settings in which that fragile subjectivity is formed' (1997, 301). With the exception of the Jews, the very naming of diasporas as Irish or African or Palestinian evokes a sense of place from which one is now *dis*-placed. Moreover, public identities are frequently formed around places, such as a nation-state, whilst being produced and reproduced in more private spaces, such as the home and the body, as discussed later. For 'stated' people, identities are often presented as stable, internal monoliths that are planted at birth to be later discovered and displayed, which denies the influence of history, culture and politics, and treats difference as a threat. Gilroy argues that diasporic identities disrupt, challenge and critique such essentialised conceptions by exposing how identities are *produced* outside or in opposition to the nation-state, how difference is *negotiated* rather than negated in diasporic contexts and how complex and dynamic the *process* of identity-formation can be.

Thinking about these things in relation to Palestinians, however, I suggest that Gilroy overstates the liberating power of diasporic identity, particularly his assertion that 'diaspora identification exists outside of, and sometimes in opposition to, the political forms and codes of modern citizenship' (Gilroy 1997, 329). Whilst this may be so for certain groups, it does not acknowledge the possibilities of geopolitical diasporic formations that reassert dominant discourses of territorialised belonging (Carter 2005). As discussed earlier, Palestinian claims to 'diaspora status' are often part of larger, politically-urgent efforts to assert the existence and validity of a Palestinian identity and the right to nation-state autonomy. Navigating the relationship between lively diasporic identities and sedentary territorial ones is clearly a delicate endeavour but, as Stuart Hall demonstrates, it is not necessary to discard all possibilities for continuity and relative stability of either individual or collective identities.

As Hall argues, cultural identity is a process of 'becoming' as well as one of 'being', in which shared histories, common experiences and cultural codes may provide stable frames of reference whilst being 'subject to the continuous "play" of history, culture and power' (1990, 205). Indeed, Hall talks of a 'dialogic' relationship between discontinuity (difference and rupture) and grounding (similarity and continuity) in the production of cultural identities. According to him this production is never complete, it is 'always in process and always constituted within, not outside, representation' (1990, 222). Those representations, in turn, rely on relations of difference or *différance* – a Derridean term reverberating between 'differ' and 'defer', which aims to show how meaning 'keeps on moving to encompass other, additional or supplementary meanings' and that 'what is then constituted within representation is always open to being deferred, staggered, serialised' (1990, 299). Concepts and invocations of identity are therefore 'strategic and positional', they are 'points of temporary attachment to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us' (Hall 1996, 3 and 6).

In this thesis I use the terms 'identity' and 'identification' to reflect this tension between ostensibly coherent ideas of the self and ongoing processes of becoming. That is, identity refers to the points of reference or 'coordinates' by which people situate themselves in the world and associated notions of a stable self, while identification foregrounds the processes by which those coordinates and notions of self are *stabilised*

in particular ways. The different subject positions that individuals occupy, and the (sometimes contentious) proliferation of such positions in diasporic contexts, mean that this stabilisation process is an ongoing one. As Brah's writes of 'diaspora space', individuals occupy a multiplicity of subject positions that are simultaneously juxtaposed, contested, proclaimed or disavowed. Diaspora space is 'where the permitted and the prohibited perpetually interrogate; and where the accepted and the transgressive imperceptibly mingle even while these syncretic forms may be disclaimed in the name of purity and tradition' (Brah 1996, 208). My understanding of identification is as the 'doings' of identity, as captured in the words 'interrogate', 'mingle' and 'disclaimed', but I argue that these must be thought in relation to the *will to claim coherent identity* that is expressed by many individuals and sometimes demanded by political projects.

Drawing upon all of these debates about and conceptualisations of diaspora and identity, I argue that stability and fluidity, sameness and *différance*, are held in tension within diasporic identity. Specifically, I suggest that dispersal fosters an almost infinite diversity of experiences and perspectives but that these function in relation to established 'coordinates' of identity, such as family, nation, religion and culture. As an adjective, the term 'diasporic' captures the multiplicity, complexity and fluidity of this process more effectively than the noun 'diaspora', which remains weighed down by implications of a coherent collectivity regardless of above-cited efforts to assert otherwise. This does not mean that I dismiss diaspora as a concept or that I am disinterested in debates around it. Rather, the over-definition of the term has had the paradoxical effect of making it more amorphous and therefore less conceptually useful. In this thesis, I am therefore concerned with the spaces, practices, relationships, ideas and feelings through which people live dispersed lives. I do not explore the dynamics of 'the' or even 'a' Palestinian diaspora, rather I explore what it means to be 'diasporic' and, more specifically, what it means to be *Palestinian* in a diasporic context.

I explore these things through the lenses of house/home, family and social groups because these spaces, practices, relationships (as well as the ideas and feelings surrounding them) are key to the everyday ways in which people live dispersed lives. Moreover, as I will show, these coordinates operate through a similar tension between

stability and fluidity, sameness and *différance* as discussed with diasporic identity, in which they draw on established social, political, cultural and spiritual norms, expectations and practices, through and against which they are created anew by idiosyncratic experiences, perspectives and practices.

House, home and dwelling

Domestic space is a flourishing area of scholarship thanks in large part to feminist theorists and geographers who challenged the dismissal of domestic space as an area of academic inquiry by showing it to be a critical site for processes of social (re)production and power-laden relationships of class, race, gender and sexuality, as well as labour, economics and imperialism (see Domosh 1998; Blunt and Dowling 2006). Approaching this wide literature, I pursue three avenues of inquiry that are relevant to my research: the relationships between house and notions of home and their connection with wider geographies of homeland; material cultures of home and identity within diasporic households; and the interplay of public and private in domestic space through social and familial relationships.

Exploring home

The slippage between the English words 'house' and 'home' reflects the centrality of the domestic sphere to the feelings of comfort, security and belonging that conventionally characterise 'home' in Western discourse. However, the homeliness of domestic space is not a given (Blunt and Dowling 2006). As feminist and cultural geographers have shown, varying experiences of domestic space are bound up with issues of gender, age, class, race and sexuality (Johnston and Valentine 1995; Pratt 1999; Valentine 1993; Varley 2008; Varley and Blasco 2001). Moreover, these politics of house and home are part of wider geographies of homeland and several authors have explored how national, imperial and diasporic homelands can operate through and on home spaces and domestic bodies.

Amy Kaplan (2002), for example, discusses how particular practices of domesticity on the United States frontier helped to secure the boundaries of the national home against alien and threatening external forces. In a similar way, Alison Blunt (2005a) explores the shifting and ambivalent concepts of home operating at a

range of scales within the Anglo-Indian community in India, and showing how, for a community which is not quite British and not quite Indian, discourses of home and belonging are made and remade through the spaces of Anglo-Indian homes and through the bodies and behaviours of Anglo-Indian women. Such ideas often work in conjunction with gendered imaginaries of the homeland itself, including its symbolic female embodiment as 'Mother India'. Other work with diasporic groups has concentrated on the sense of belonging at stake when people talk about home and homeland. Geraldine Pratt, for example, discusses the staging of a play by the Filipino Canadian Youth Alliance as part of their 'struggle against forgetfulness' (assimilation) and in 'an effort to recover a home in the Philippines in order to achieve a sense of belonging' (Pratt 2003, 42). Participants in Claire Dwyer's study of young Muslim women in Britain (2002) discussed similar efforts to make the 'homeland' (Pakistan) feel like 'home', whilst battling with homesickness for Britain, where they had been born and raised.

Emerging from this work is the importance of understanding home within the contours of the cultures in which they are situated. For example, the discursive and emotional freight that 'home' and 'homeland' carry in English does not translate in the same way in Arabic and discussions of how groups such as Palestinians work with ideas of home must therefore be considered with these differences in mind. In Arabic, *beit* refers to both house and home as a physical shelter and does not conjure 'an affective space' in the same way as the English word. For that, Arabic speakers use *al balad*, meaning cultural homeland or territory, which is distinct from (but may overlap with) the notion of a political or national homeland, *al watan* (Hammer 2005). *Al balad* also has no fixed scale and as such may be used to refer to one's village or town of origin or residence, as well as a region within a country or the country itself. A further point worth noting is that *al watan* can be used to refer to more than one country, as in *al watan al ărabee* ('the Arab world') whereas *al balad* is resolutely singular and definitive: THE homeland.

Thus, although English and Arabic articulations of house, home and homeland differ in certain ways, they express similar geographies of identity and 'roots'; geographies which echo tendencies in Western discourses to fuse identity with

territory, conjoining a sense of self with nation-state belonging in a historical and cultural homeland. Narrators of Palestinian identity, for example, often articulate it in terms of an emotive and gendered geography of Palestine. *My Mother* was written by Palestine's poet laureate, Mahmoud Darwish, for his own mother but has been popularly interpreted as referring to Palestine, while another of Darwish's poems, *Lover from Palestine* (1970), is exemplary of the tendency to depict the natural landscape as a woman's body and a stolen lover whom the heterosexual Palestinian male is fighting to liberate (Lindholm Schulz 2003; Yuval-Davis 1997). Likewise, Fawaz Turki (1981, 373) writes in a scholarly journal about the intimate relationship between Palestinians (embodied in the figure of the peasant) and the land of Palestine:

> To see a Palestinian peasant on the land is not to see a man working or tilling the land, but a man making love to it, possessed of it, possessed by it, in a sensual absorption at once erotic and spiritual – and to see a glimpse of the outrage that he would later carry within him at its loss.

This graphic representation of belonging folds together two of the narratives discussed in chapter one (romanticised peasantry and gendered nationhood) in a manner that undermines the active participation of both women and the wealthier classes. However, the simultaneously metaphysical and territorialised mode of belonging being asserted here also corresponds with wider discourses in which the relationship between people and place is imagined through metaphors of arboreal rootedness. Indeed, imagery of the (national) community as a genealogical tree implanted in the soil of a specific territory is rife in both Zionist-Israeli and Palestinian national discourses as a means of legitimising claims to primordial belonging (Bardenstein 1998). However, in the process these arboreal images of belonging also run the risk of spatial imprisonment: by prioritising rootedness and pathologising diasporic life they negate valuable contributions to the national space by those living outside it (Malkki 1992).

Increasing attention to global migrations and expanding literatures on diaspora have helped to unfix identity from nation, troubling assumptions that everyone can claim a stable and singular home and homeland, and encouraging more complex understandings of how such spaces and identities are materially and imaginatively

produced (Al-Ali and Koser 2002; Blunt 2005b; Blunt and Varley 2004; Cohen 1997). In turn, these reinterpretations of home and homeland have forced diaspora and migration scholars to pay attention to places and place-making among people and communities on the move, to consider the 're-territorializing elements' of diaspora and multiple sites of 'rootedness,' alongside their transgression of borders and boundaries (Ahmed at al 2003; Blunt and McEwan 2002; Brah 1996; Carter 2005; Nagel and Staeheli 2004; Rapport and Dawson 1998).

These critical debates around house, home and homeland have been taken up in various ways in relation to Palestinians. Chris Harker (2009) explores them in the context of Palestine itself through the lens of house demolitions, a discriminatory Israeli planning tactic and tool of collective punishment meted out for anything from unauthorised architectural modifications to being involved in an act of 'terrorism' (for more on house demolitions and 'urbicide', see Graham 2004; Weizman 2007). However, as Harker demonstrates the phrase 'house demolitions' emphasises a structural assault and effaces the economic, cultural, social and emotional significance of house as a home. 'House demolitions' thus reproduce orientalist discourses of Palestinians as lacking a meaningful attachment to place, while also materially clearing the way for Israeli national expansion. Moreover, Harker argues that by focusing on the violence against domestic space leftist activist groups, such as the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD), continue to script Palestine solely through the Israeli occupation, which risks reproducing the discourse they critique. Harker therefore calls for more attention to the intimate spaces and relationships of people's lives, which intersect with but also exceed the context of the occupation.

This exploration of house, home and homeland for Palestinians is unusual insofar as literature on this topic often centres on diasporic contexts. The Palestinian author and academic Ghada Karmi, for example, describes her mother's unswerving loyalty to Palestine as her home and therefore set about reconfiguring their small, English, suburban semi to resemble the Mediterranean villa they had left behind, in order to 'recreate Palestine in London – as if we had never left, had never gone to Damascus afterwards or come to live in England now' (Karmi 2002, 174). From a wider social perspective, Camilla Gibb and Celia Rothenberg (2000) discuss the way in which story-

telling strategies provided a mechanism for communicating between men and women about delicate subjects in their small West Bank village but were considered shameful by the wider Muslim community in their new context of Toronto. In this way the socio-cultural practices of this community in Palestine had to be adjusted in migration, with new senses of home cultivated and certain aspects of their own culture sacrificed in order to belong elsewhere. For others, however, any sense of home for diasporic Palestinians is precarious. Abdulhadi (2003), for example, recounts how her own feelings of at-home-ness in New York changed after 9/11: suddenly it no longer mattered that she knew all the back streets, had an apartment, a job and a driver's license in the city; as an Arab and a Palestinian, she simply prayed to 'pass' as someone else, to avoid drawing attention to her background.

What emerges most strongly from all of this literature is that 'home' is a profoundly spatial concept: 'it is both material and imaginative, a site *and* a set of meanings/emotions. Home is a material dwelling and it is also an affective space, shaped by emotions and feelings of belonging' (Blunt and Dowling 2006, 22). Thinking about home in this way – as a set of intersecting, variable and contextual ideas and feelings, which construct, connect, and extend across places, spaces and scales – enables it to refer to a place of residence and of work, to provide the locus for national and imperial imaginaries, and to constitute a mobile concept within a transnational world.

Material cultures

Exploring the affective properties of house in relation to home and homeland, particularly for diasporic groups, has inspired research into the physical properties of houses and material cultures of the domestic interior. As Catherine Ingraham (2004) argues, architecture can be a form of 'evidence' in migration, partly because it embodies the place left behind simply by virtue of being too large to carry, but also because buildings can function as a gathering place for the historical and cultural evidence of movement. Ingraham makes this argument in relation to public buildings such as the former immigration centre on Ellis Island, now a museum housing yellowed travel documents, battered suitcases and other fragments of migratory history, as well as preserving the spaces within which the processing of migrant bodies

took place. I would argue that a similar argument applies to domestic material cultures of migrants, in which the house functions in some sense as a secure repository for personal (historical) objects and thus as a lived space of identity (and possibly home) that articulates one's place in the world, both to oneself and to others. As Daniel Miller asserts, 'it is the material culture within our home that appears as both our appropriation of the larger world and often as the representation of that world within our private domain' (Miller 2001b, 1).

Divya Tolia-Kelly (2004b) has explored the particular importance of visual material domestic culture to South Asian women living in Britain, examining how objects not only record previous homes elsewhere in the world but are also enrolled in embodied practices through which people situate themselves in a new place. The domestic sphere, she suggests, is 'an archive' of the 'multiple provenances' to which migrants are connected and through which they establish the foundations of their lives and identities in Britain. Tolia-Kelly's focus is on the materiality of visual cultures of landscape in South Asian women's homes, which she argues 'refract, represent, and are metonymical signifiers of other environments and landscapes' (2004b, 676). For her, displaying landscapes of other home-places in the British/South Asian living room is to give those past landscapes an embodied presence in the here and now. This enables identification with home(s) to be grounded through 'sensory engagements' with the places depicted, while also disrupting notions of the 'British' living room, 'British' landscapes and 'British' identity.

These travelling material cultures are processes of remembering and re-membering the bigger home-spaces that had to be left behind; the display and embodied identification with material cultures helps migrants to situate themselves in a new place and across a range of other places simultaneously. Memory is crucial for Tolia-Kelly, in terms of both individual and collective identities, as the 'prismatic qualities' of material cultures enable connections not only with places but with people, historical stories, narratives and traditions through social memory. Individual objects may in one sense be bound up with individual biographies but can also be involved in large-scale stories of national identity and citizenship. In this way, South Asian material cultures in the British domestic sphere not only reference the intimacy of

lives and domestic spheres left behind, they are also 'sites of historical identification' with wider, nationalised 'landscapes of belonging, tradition and self-identity' (Tolia-Kelly 2004a, 315; see also McEwan 2003).

As well as an embodied sensory engagement, memory can also be a performative practice (Fortier 1999), thus cultures around the use, display and meaning of material objects must be thought together with the habitual and ritualised practices at work in domestic space. This means engaging with domestic architecture and design, which 'are inscribed with meanings, values and beliefs that both reflect and reproduce ideas about gender, class, sexuality, family and nation' which may or may not connect with how those spaces are actively lived by people (Blunt 2005, 507). These processes are bound up with Lefebvre's conceptualisation of space as a circulation of perceived, conceived and lived spaces; or put differently spatial practice, representational spaces and representations of space (Lefebvre 1991). Focusing on the interplay between representational spaces and representations of space, scholars have sought to understand how buildings are inhabited by people *and* how these inhabitations contest and conform to the inhabitations imagined by the building's designers. However, spatial practice also influences the way buildings are inhabited because practices propose new kinds of social space while also presupposing established ones, such that space and spatial practices operate in a dialectical relationship (1991, 38; see Cairns 2004).

Mark Llewellyn (2004) has explored this interplay of spaces in the context of a 1930s London housing development, particularly the disjuncture between the architects' and designers' ideal of modernist domestic space, citizenship and community, and residents' working class practices. These issues were dramatised in differing attitudes towards kitchens and living rooms: the designers kept the kitchen small and functional, solely oriented towards the efficient manufacture of meals that would then be eaten in the living room; residents, however, maintained working class practices of using the kitchen as a living space, including for eating, in order to keep living room pristine for guests. Ayona Datta (2008) addresses similar issues in relation to low income widow housing in Delhi. Here the United Nations, State planners and local architects designed a block of small, one-storey, semi-open dwellings for single,

elderly women to live in a community of their peers. However, residents have gradually adapted and expanded the space according to their own needs and desires, placing greater emphasis on privacy than on communitarian support, creating domestic layouts that emphasise patriarchal family rather than solitude, and making structural changes using stronger materials. As Datta writes, 'in appropriating, demolishing, and transforming the physical landscape of the colony, the residents produced their own architecture, one that was very different from the architects', the State's and UN's vision of low-income widow housing' and of low-income widows themselves (Datta 2008, 242).

In both of these examples, domestic space is situated within wider discourses and geographies of class, modernity, gender and development, which challenges public/private distinctions by exploring how social forces of the 'outside world' operate through and within houses. Dohmen (2004) and Bryden (2004) take these debates further by exploring how the everyday production of threshold designs and the architecture of courtyards produce domestic spaces that are performatively and materially involved with their environments. For Dohmen, designs drawn on the doorsteps of Tamil Nadu are part of a relationship between residents and the local community, asserting the importance of community in feelings of home, as well as a spiritual link between inside and outside, house and cosmos. Bryden explores similar dynamics of 'outer' and 'inner' space through the *haveli* or courtyard house in India. Here the very architecture of the house is linked with Hindu spirituality, the rooms are organised around the flow of air and energy and the dimensions of the human body, and the practical rhythms of the house follow the passage of the sun. In this way, the *haveli* is 'a kind of articulating structure, delineating the interaction of the inhabitants with the space of their home and with what lies beyond it' (Bryden 2004, 39).

Arab houses of a certain social calibre share some of these characteristics, particularly the courtyard (see Noor 1986), although few contemporary houses would be constructed in this manner. Rather, the residential landscape of Palestine-Israel is comprised mainly of simple, modernist constructions, historically intended to bolster middle-class Palestinian claims to modernity under the British Mandate, and are clad in pale 'Jerusalem' stone in order to assert indigeneity and historical/geological

connection (Bishara 2003; see also Weizmann 2007). Indeed, literature on Palestinian domestic space tends to focus on these politicised discourses of home and identity, particularly assertions of houses as cultural property within claims to home and homeland (Bishara 2003) and as the focus of Israeli violence against Palestinian women in West Jerusalem (Abowd 2007). Missing from these studies is sustained attention to the lived experiences, social relations and emotional significances that make up domestic life. As Harker (2009) argues in relation to house demolitions, overemphasising the politicised discourses of house ignores the extensive economic, cultural, social and emotional significance of house as a *home*.

The notion of dwelling is crucial here: a mode of being in the world that is partly produced by a building such as a house, but also precedes building (Blunt and Dowling 2006, 3). Indeed, this discussion of the politics of house and home has been an exploration of different kinds of dwelling, as the various spatial imaginaries of home (homeland, nation, *al balad, al watan*) and the spatial practices of memory and everyday domestic life contribute to feelings of rootedness, belonging and identity that help people situate themselves. This is particularly pertinent for diasporic groups, whose modes of being in the world partly operate through connections with distant places and people, as well as through the spaces and objects of their current place of residence. Thus domestic space remains a key site of dwelling practices but those practices should not be confined to domestic space, rather they must be considered in relation to other spaces, people and social forces: neighbours, family, homelands, class, gender, modernity.

Dwelling among diasporic Palestinians is an under-explored topic. As Harker (2009) argues, Palestinian lives are too often scripted through abstracted, geopolitical machinations that ignore the intimate spaces and relationships through which people 'dwell' in difficult circumstances. Literature abounds on the politics of nationalised homeland within monolithic constructions of Palestinian identity but this must be problematised and held in tension with more processual and contextual articulations of self and belonging. A productive starting point here is domestic space and practice, which have proved to be such rich sites of dwelling, particularly among diasporic groups. My first research question is therefore: how are house and senses of home

linked for Palestinians in Britain? More specifically, I ask how senses of home are produced in everyday life, how domestic spaces and material objects contribute to feelings of being at home and how articulations of home vary between languages and among people.

These issues are further opened up by taking family into consideration, since kinship and domesticity have an interesting relationship within Palestinian society that says much about the issues of home, identity and belonging that concern me. In the next section I therefore move from the spaces to the relationships of dwelling, exploring ideas, practices and feelings about kinship, relatedness and roots in diasporic contexts.

Relatedness and roots

Family is a growing area of interest for geographers and work with diasporic and transnational groups has contributed significantly to understandings of family relatedness and the politics of intimacy (Baldassar 2008; Parreñas 2005; Wilding 2006). In this section I explore that literature in two particular ways: firstly, through conceptualisations of family and relatedness as a kind of geography, with implications for feelings of rootedness and place-based identity; and, secondly, through practices and experiences of diasporic relatedness and the associated politics of home and homing. These debates will be connected by a close reading of family and place within Palestinian history and society, asserting the situatedness of kinship as both an idea and in practice, and establishing the role of geography in shaping as well as constituting relatedness and roots.

Conceptualising kinship

In an article exploring geographies of intimacy, Gill Valentine (2008) describes family as an absent presence within geography: present insofar as research into house and home has opened up issues surrounding motherhood and the organisation of domestic care (for example, Pratt 1999); but absent insofar as geographers have failed to engage with the emotional ties within, around and beyond the nuclear family, across wider networks of cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents, surrogates, friends, lovers and adoptive relations. This coding of 'family' as 'household' and privileging of

heteronormative nuclear family units echoes criticisms levelled at early work in anthropological kinship studies for collapsing the affective relationships of kin groups (family) into a localised group (household) and for privileging Euro-American biogenetic notions of family (Holy 1996; Malinowski 1913; Schneider 1984). At the same time, however, anthropology has led the way in researching culturally-specific forms of relatedness, sensitive to the intersections between biology and society in the production of relatedness (Galvin 2001). Recent edited volumes show how much work has been done in a range of socio-cultural contexts (among the Maori, Samoans, Malinese, Jamaicans) and on different family formations (adoption, polygyny, parenting over separate households), as well as into conventionally maligned relatives, such as in-laws, and new reproductive technologies (Carsten 2000; Franklin and McKinnon 2001; Stone 2001).

The geographies of these family relationships being explored by anthropologists are clear, not simply because they place kinship in social, cultural, national and ethnic contexts, but because they show how family is linked to the production of place and identity, and how 'closeness' and 'distance' among family can be a function of physical and emotional proximity. Edwards and Strathern (2000), for example, examine how in one Lancashire town belonging to family and to place 'enlarge' one another. Here, the migration and labour history of the town is narrated through families and the language around local community and family are interwoven. Both are articulated in terms of 'stability', 'communication', being 'tight-knit' and the breakdown of these qualities. Both are also seen to be based to a certain extent on physical proximity and idealised relations of mutual respect and reciprocity, which masks other practices of gossip, stigma and antipathy. Furthermore, Edwards and Strathern highlight the physical and emotional geographies of 'closeness' that can override biological constructions of intimacy. That is, while the ties between a child and her mother are often imagined to be closer than those between that child and her grandmother, the strength of connections between people is also drawn from other kinds of proximity, such as living nearby and interacting frequently, as well as feelings of support, confidence, trust and mutual obligation. By the same token, 'distance' within families may be constructed

not through physical separation but through lack of trust and the absence of obligations.

These developments around cultures of relatedness have been slow to filter into English-language scholarship on family in Arab societies. Until recently, conventional understandings of Arab kinship were based on empirically superficial and orientalist research conducted by people lacking detailed or native knowledge of Arab cultural norms and customs (Feghali 1997). Feghali argues that this anthropological emphasis on biogenetic relationships over-stresses Western genealogical kinship ideologies around family and 'tribe' or 'clan' groupings, neglecting more extensive relations of loyalty and obligation, and the historical and geographical conditions in which behaviours enhancing social relations have come to be valued so highly. This lack of context, coupled with lazy dichotomies between Arab and 'Western' social priorities and the lack of sustained empirical engagement with Arab cultural practices, provides relatively little insight into the complex and situated dynamics of Arab social relations in general and Arab kinship practices in particular.

Across *bilaad ish-sham*, the former Ottoman region which includes modern Syria, Palestine-Israel, Lebanon and western Jordan, there are three broad 'scales' of kin, which overlap and diverge in a range of ways, including and excluding a range of blood and non-blood relations: immediate family (*ăyleh*); extended family (*daar)*; and descent- or kin-group (*ħamouleh*). Ghabra (1987, 14) describes *ăyleh* as a patriarchal domestic unit consisting of parents, children, paternal grandparents, paternal uncles and their families, and unmarried paternal aunts, although additions can be made to this unit in the form of a son-in-law, an orphaned (paternal) niece/nephew or close (paternal) cousin. The *daar*, however, can number between a few dozen and several hundred people and is composed of multiple patriarchal households sharing the same patrilineal line and possibly also the same family name. The *ħamouleh* is a much larger group of people who claim descent from a particular biological ancestor and which may be spread across a set of villages or towns. Even this broad definition is misleading as there is no clear or permanent delimitation of *ħamouleh* and different people base membership on different (but always patrilineal) criteria (Escribano 1987). However fluidly defined and practised are *ăyleh, daar* and *ħamouleh*, Ghabra suggests

that they exist in a hierarchy, from immediate family 'outwards', and presents the boundaries of each type of family as fixed. This collapses biological 'closeness' into emotional importance and undermines the practical blurriness of these family 'types'.

Other writers on Palestinian kinship have been more accepting of the fluidity and contestation of family, emphasising Arab cultures of relatedness in which biogenetic relationships and genealogy are socially rather than 'naturally' produced and embedded within economic, political and geographical contexts (see Taraki 2006a). The historian Beshara Doumani's work is crucial to advancing such a situated understanding of Palestinian family in particular and Arab family more generally. His edited collection, *Family history in the Middle East* (2003), brings together researchers from a range of disciplinary backgrounds to shed overdue critical light on historical Arab family practices through the lenses of class, gender, religion, law and modernity and within a range of geographical contexts, from Egypt, Palestine and Lebanon, to Iran and Istanbul. More importantly, Doumani's (1995) exploration of Jabal Nablus during the latter half of Ottoman rule demonstrates the intricate interrelationship of family, place, political and economic power within just one region of Palestine and in so doing dramatises the complexity and multiplicity of Palestinian identities.

Placing Palestinian family

The links between family and place in Palestine begin with the term *daar*, which refers to both family and house. As discussed above, *daar* specifically refers to extended family. In terms of house, *daar* historically refers to a house with multiple rooms that would have been owned by wealthier families, in contrast with the peasant's single-room dwelling, referred to as *beit* (Canaan 1933).[3] The interrelationship suggested by terminology is reinforced by historic social practices, in which the three most significant events in Palestinian life were said to be marriage, the birth of male children, and acquiring a new house (ibid.). However, these connections between family and house are a small part of larger historical social geographies of kinship in Palestine, particularly around the *ħamouleh*. Here family is more than a biological connection, it is a mode of social organisation; a 'functional idea' employed to fit people together and create alliances (Escribano 1987).

[3] *Beit* is discussed in more detail in chapter four.

Family names are crucial to this social operation of family in ways that highlight the economic and political significance of kinship and notions of rootedness. As Doumani explains, family names were not used by the majority of Palestinians in Ottoman Palestine. Only very high-ranking political and religious families would maintain a stable surname over centuries. Most other people would take their father's first name as their second or family name, such that the sons and daughters of the author, Beshara Doumani, would be Ahmed or Muna Beshara. Other names could be derived from occupations, a person's physical features or memorable events, which changed over time. Names were also linked to the name of the village, town or country from which the family 'originally' came and so names might also change with migration.

The stabilisation of family names among the middle classes was a particular historical feature that Doumani illustrates through the example of the 'Arafat family'. Previously known as 'Daar al-Shahid' (the house of Shahid), a leap in the fortunes of Ahmad al-Shahid's grandson, Arafat, in the early eighteenth century encouraged his own grandsons and subsequent generations to take his name as their surname: Arafat's son took this as his second name, according to custom, but his own sons chose instead to use their grandfather's first name as their second name, therefore aligning themselves with Arafat and as part of the 'Arafat family'.

> By so doing, they signalled the introduction into the larger community of a new family in the larger meaning of the word; that is, not just as a kinship unit but also an economic, political, and social one. This was also an act of exclusion: by maintaining the family name Arafat, they signalled their successful branching off from other descendents of 'the sons of al-Shahid', although they were part of the same kinship unit. In a sense, this was a declaration of intent on their part to draw boundaries within which family members were expected to cooperate and work in tandem on a range of social and economic issues through kin solidarity (Doumani 1995, 65).

In this way, family names were particularly important for middle and lower-middle class Palestinians as they were 'a form of property whose value depended on the intimate connections between physical space, economic fortune, social standing, and cultural practices of the household' (Doumani 1995, 63). Names would therefore come and go within Palestinian society according to the growing or fading fortunes of particular households, with weaker members of society sometimes adopting family

names in order to align themselves with (and receive protection from) powerful households. Peasants in particular were vulnerable to both the vagaries of rain-fed agriculture and to power struggles among leading local families or between those families and the Ottoman government, and so they drew their economic support and physical defence from the *ħamouleh* (Escribano 1987). Equally, if a family was too successful in reproducing their own wealth and a strong male line, then a new 'branch' of the family would form around a different family name, as with Daar al-Shahid and Arafat (Doumani 1995). Thus *ħamouleh* is a classed mode of kinship, operating differently among peasants in villages than among the merchant classes and leading families in urban areas.

This social and geographical situatedness of a *ħamouleh* has also had implications for local identities among diasporic Palestinians, particularly among long-term refugees of peasant backgrounds. A particular village or set of villages would be populated by the same *ħamouleh* for several generations (Doumani 1995). Thus in 1948, when hundreds of thousands of Palestinians fled their villages and lands, the refugee camps in which they found safety often came to be spatially organised along village lines and a strong village consciousness continues to function among Palestinian refugees in Lebanese camps (Sayigh 2007). In a somewhat similar way, Ghabra (1987) describes the mobilisation of family and village ties by skilled and unskilled Palestinians migrating to Kuwait: while middle-class, educated, professionals found work with relative ease, unskilled migrants relied more heavily on their family and social networks to find housing and employment, sometimes in companies run by settled Palestinians. Ghabra describes these waves of migration as establishing 'a bridge' for other relatives and creating a chain of migration by which whole extended families and village networks came to be re-established in Kuwait, often clustering in similar areas and neighbourhoods.

This discussion of family name dramatises the important economic, political and social functions of kinship during the Ottoman period, which continue to resonate among contemporary Palestinians. As I will demonstrate in chapter five, family continues to provide a powerful social coordinate among Palestinians in Britain, forging diasporic relatedness through placing people within both a social hierarchy and

a social geography of Palestine. At the same time, however, these 'functional ideas' reinforce conservative formations of family, which emphasise patrilineal descent and deny more complex gender dynamics in the maintenance of family name and everyday family life (see Taraki 2006a). Indeed, the perpetuation of such conventional family formations stands as a warning against romanticising the endurance of family-place relationships. As Rothenberg (1998/1999) argues, we should not read this longevity as the 'preservation' of *ħamouleh*-place identities or to discuss it as a diasporic 'revival', rather we must consider precisely how village and *ħamouleh* identities depend on and interact with one another, and with other modes of identity. We should also attempt to understand the continued relevance of family and place within the historical context and political economies of Palestinian lives in refugee camps, under occupation, within Israel itself or in other diasporic contexts.

Diasporic relatedness

These politics of family, place and identity in context might be productively approached by focusing on the 'doing' rather than the 'definition' of kinship. This recognises the enduring power and potency of 'ideas of incontrovertible bonds based on blood' but situates them alongside the 'routine practices of choosing kin' within which blood is also a 'flexible criteria for relatedness' (Nash 2005, 452). From this perspective, a relative who is 'claimed' by blood may also be 'disowned through lack of social interest', and likewise a lapsed relative may be reclaimed 'through resurrected biological links' (Edwards and Strathern 2000, 160).

Processes of settling within diasporic contexts have the capacity to bring these 'doings' of kinship into relief as all kinds of networks are mobilised for advice and support. For example, Creese, Dyck and McLaren (1999) have discussed the practical role of families in helping migrants to establish new lives in a different country. Families, they found, provide mechanisms for building networks of support and for seeking out employment and educational opportunities, both of which alleviate possible feelings of stress, dependence and alienation in a new environment. Ghabra has similarly described 'family cohesion' as 'the cornerstone in the Palestinians' ability to regroup and re-establish their network' in Kuwait, with varying consequences for conventional practices of kinship (1987, 50).

In one sense, this reinforces norms of family, as conventions of providing for one's family were influential in the very decision to migrate in search of employment and economic opportunities. Moreover, maintaining certain traditions ensured that connections among dispersed relatives were also maintained in Kuwait. Prior to a marriage, for example, both families consult networks of relatives in order to ascertain the reputation of the other party and the suitability of the match (Ghabra 1987). In another sense, however, the exigencies of migration and the importance of relatedness in diasporic contexts can open up new possibilities for the doing of kinship. Continuing with the case of Palestinians in Kuwait, Ghabra suggests that important family support networks, which in Palestine would have been comprised primarily of paternal relatives, now expanded to include maternal kin. He partly attributes this to the changing status of women in Palestinian society after 1948, but it may also be because *al Nakba* distributed kin unevenly across a wide area and where paternal relatives may be further afield, maternal relatives have proved to be equally valuable in providing support.

The emotional substance of family relationships is highly influential within these social practices of relatedness, yet implicit in Ghabra's study. Here it is important to pay attention to the bonds among kin and the different experiences of migration according to generation and gender, sometimes with profound consequences for feelings of integration, in-between-ness and isolation (Creese et al 1999). Johanna Waters (2002), for example, has demonstrated the emotional cost of transnational lives for Chinese 'astronaut' families, including the erosion of marital intimacy and disruptions to the rhythm of family life, as well as the rhythm of women's lives around their families. Walton-Roberts and Pratt (2005) paint a similarly intimate portrait of how members of one South Asian family have negotiated migration, identity, class and gender between the Punjab and British Columbia. Emotions are central to the way this family articulate their experiences and desires, from parents' feelings of class empowerment to their teenage son's sense of homelessness, and the importance of maintaining material transnational ties with 'home'.

Here socially-produced geographies of 'closeness' and 'distance' among kin, as discussed at the beginning of the section, take on greater complexity in the context of

diasporic and transnational family formations. Focusing too exclusively on the emotional aspects of family, however, risks reinforcing binary alignments between emotion and other devalued realms, such as domesticity and femininity. As such, these need to be thought together with the practical strategies deployed by diasporic families and their negotiation and performance of various kinds of power, as discussed above. They also need to be considered in relation to the politics of belonging and the imaginative power of family, place and identity (see Nash 2005; McClintock 1995).

Catherine Nash (2008) has explored how the imaginative power of family intersects with traditional models of the nation and emerging discourses of diaspora with profound conceptual and material implications for questions of belonging and identity. With respect to Irish diasporic genealogy, Nash demonstrates how practices of tracing family are simultaneously processes of reproducing and reconfiguring particular notions of family relatedness. Moreover, the choice to identify specifically with one's Irish ancestry over other family lineages, as well as decisions to follow certain 'branches' of the family rather than others, are subsumed within imaginaries of natural family connections and belonging. At stake within these claims to family belonging are diasporic claims to belonging in and to Ireland.

In this way, diasporic genealogies simultaneously challenge and reinforce conventional models of the family and relationships between place and identity. In conjunction with other modes of diasporic relatedness I have discussed, these ways of 'doing kinship' may be thought of as homing practices; ways of settling in diasporic contexts that acknowledge but also critique discourses of kinship and fixed origins (see Brah 1996). Moreover, practices and feelings of relatedness can be seen as contributing to a sense of home or dwelling for diasporic groups; a way of being in the world that operates through connections with distant places and people, as well as through the spaces, objects and people in their current place of residence. This reiterates and extends an earlier point raised about the problematic equivalence of house and home: house is not always a home, nor is home always a house (Blunt and Dowling 2006). Sometimes home is family or at least a feeling of relatedness that may be carried at all times (see Hammad 1996; Hammer 2005).

Approaching Palestinian relatedness as a 'doing' also creates opportunities to critically address ideas of rootedness constructed through historic geographies of family. As I will show in chapter six, paying careful attention to social practices of relatedness, such as the dynamics of knowledge at work in the mobilisation of historic family geographies in diasporic contexts, enables more precise understanding of the relationships between family and place; how they depend on and interact with one another. Moreover, thinking relatedness and identity together, through the interplay of individual and collective affiliations and the (re)production of belonging, enables a greater understanding of the continued relevance of family and place within the historical and social contexts of diasporic Palestinian lives. This approach works with and builds on previous discussions about house, home and dwelling by pursuing the ways in which home and identity are constructed through domestic family relationships and practices, as well as through enduring functions of family as a social coordinate among Palestinians. Moreover, it contributes to expanded geographies of home and homeland by considering not just the spaces but the spatiality of relationships that contribute to feelings of belonging in the world.

My second research question explores these issues by asking how family figures in the everyday lives of Palestinians in Britain. Specifically, I investigate the practices, behaviours and expectations involved in the 'doing' of Palestinian family relatedness. I also inquire about the contribution of feelings and practices of family relatedness to senses of home, and the influence of living in Britain.

These issues may be further expanded by considering collective belonging and identity, since family is itself a form of social grouping and powerful metaphor of large-scale 'communities' such as the nation. In the next section I therefore turn to discuss group formation in relation to individuality, particularly the 'naturalisation' of certain groupings such as nation, family and home, and how research into diasporic 'communities' encourages different approaches to collective identity.

Collective identities, community and beyond

Identity, as discussed earlier, is the interplay of individual experience and wider context: it is a process of both 'being' and 'becoming', in which shared histories,

common experiences and cultural codes may provide stable frames of reference whilst being 'subject to the continuous "play" of history, culture and power' (Hall 1990, 205). Other people – among whom histories are shared, for whom experiences and cultural codes are common – are central to this process. Identity, as a process of imaginatively situating ourselves in the world, therefore involves situating ourselves among and in relation to others. In this section I explore Iris Marion Young's conceptualisation of social groups in relation to individuality before examining the interrelated concepts of nation, family and home as key framings of collective identity. I then engage with the diasporic possibilities for group identity and new perspectives on community. Drawing on ideas and practices of kinship, friendship and language, I explore the ways in which diaspora space opens up potential for new syncretic modes of collective identification that challenge, proclaim and juxtapose established ones (Brah 1996).

Groups and the individual

In her critique of dominant conceptualisations of social groups, Iris Marion Young (1990) describes two key models of collectivity: the aggregate model in which people are arbitrarily characterised and grouped by attributes such as ethnicity or language; and the association model in which groups are defined by their membership of formally organised institutions. Young sees several problems with both of these conceptualisations. Firstly, organising people by attributes yields as many groups as there are combinations of people and therefore renders social groups meaningless. This model also assumes a causal link between physical attributes and identity, denying the importance of other factors, such as social status, shared history and self-identity, in the definition of the group as a group. A second problem and one which concerns both models is that they assume the individual to be prior to the group: individuals are seen as 'making up' groups insofar as it is pre-existing people who set-up associations or organised institutions, and it is those already with brown hair who may be called 'brunettes'.

For Young, however, groups are socially prior to individuals 'because people's identities are partly constituted by their group affinities' (p9). From this perspective 'a person's particular sense of history, affinity, and separateness, even the person's mode of reasoning, evaluating, and expressing feeling, are constituted partly by her or his

group affinities' (p45). This is not to foreclose individuality, transcendence of the group or multiple identities that exceed the group, rather it is to acknowledge the importance of group norms and categorisation in constituting individual identity:

> Identity is 'a socialized sense of individuality, an internal organization of self-perception concerning one's relationship to social categories, that also incorporates views of the self perceived to be held by others. Identity is constituted relationally, through involvement with – and incorporation of – significant others and integration into communities' (Epstein 1987, 29 quoted in Young 1990, 45).

As in Hall's assertions of cultural identity as a process of 'being' as well as a 'becoming', Young's apprehension of identity is similarly as a dialogic relationship between individuals and their social worlds: people are defined in relation to how others identify them (using established categories of group-ness, which change over time) but such identifications may or may not be taken up (based on one's location within certain structures of power) and in that taking up (or refusal to take up) the meanings and norms of group identities are (re)made.

Social groups in this sense are not real by virtue of their substance but as a form of social relations. This applies as much to the dynamics of individual and group identities as it does to groups themselves, which Young argues are also relationally defined. Similar cultural forms, practices and ways of life may prompt an affinity among members of a group and lead them to associate with one another more than with non-group members. However, these groups only exist in relation to at least one other group. That is, group identifications arise 'in the encounter and interaction between social collectivities' that may be part of the same society but nevertheless regard themselves as distinct in some way (p43). Since these differentiations are 'multiple, cross-cutting, fluid, and shifting' people often experience many group identities that may or may not cohere in their 'culture, perspective and relations of privilege and oppression'. Since people's identities are partly constituted by these heterogeneous affinities and relations, Young concludes that there can be no coherent subjectivity (p48).

This detailed conceptualisation of social groups, individuality and identity is useful and Young's emphasis on the relational processes of group formation is important. However, focusing too heavily on the multiplicity and fluidity of social

group identification runs the risk of ignoring how these are stabilised; how the repetition of certain identities within this landscape of shifting, cross-cutting, incoherent experiences are steadied to the point that they appear as 'natural' coordinates of belonging (see Butler 1999). I would argue that nation is one such naturalised social grouping, which operates through imaginative geographies of kinship and roots to provide an enduring coordinate of individual and collective identity and home.

Nation, family and home

Benedict Anderson refers to nations as 'imagined political communities' which are both limited and sovereign: imagined because all of their members will never meet, 'yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion'; a community insofar as members have a sense of 'deep, horizontal comradeship'; limited insofar as it is territorially bounded; and sovereign insofar as the state is the locus of power, rather than a divinely-ordained monarch (Anderson 1991, 6-7). Anderson identifies three interrelated factors involved in the cultural production of Euro-American national consciousness: the declining importance of religion, a shift in apprehensions of time, and the emergence of print capitalism. According to Anderson, this combination of processes provided the conditions for 'national consciousness', as people struggled to make sense of human suffering without recourse to God while at the same time being increasingly organised into identifiable (governable) units by virtue of language.

While Anderson's conceptualisation appears to emphasise active processes of identity formation, Hage (1996) regards this as a relatively passive conceptualisation of nation that resonates with discourses of home and homeland discussed earlier: nation is presented as a 'homely space' in which belonging is romantically fused with an apparently safe, aesthetically-pleasing and bountiful place (see also Blunt and Dowling 2006). Moreover, the national population may also be symbolically romanticised as an organic family into which one is born (or 'naturalised') and through which one's geographical roots are genealogically traceable (Nash 2008). In this way, the parameters for claiming nationality (through birth and naturalisation) echo the play of blood and law within Western practices of kinship, where biological and adoptive family ties may both be experienced as incontrovertible and contingent (Carsten 2004).

Folding together home, family and nation in this way raises issues about how gender features in the symbolic (re)production of the nation, specifically how women's bodies and behaviours are called upon to mark the boundaries of the imagined community (McClintock 1995). As Yuval-Davis (1997) demonstrates, women are often constructed as symbols and ciphers for nation rather than as active agents in nationalist projects, despite being actively involved in those very projects (see Legg 2003). Building on well-established blood-and-belonging, people-power, Eugenicist and Malthusian discourses, these ideas turn on women's abilities, or more precisely responsibilities, to reproduce the nation by producing children. Yuval-Davis also suggests that women, as the symbolic bearers of collective identity and honour, the carriers of tradition and the educators of children, also bear the burden for the cultural reproduction of the nation. These issues take on a more literal function in Israel, where Jewishness (and therefore citizenship) is transferred matrilineally and where the reproductive activities of female Palestinian citizens are closely monitored (Carsten 2004; Kanaaneh 2002).

These processes may be complicated by migration. For example, it is easier for a diasporic Palestinian man to marry someone raised in Palestine itself than for a woman. This is partly due to Palestinian citizenship law, which states that a child is considered Palestinian if the father is descended from pre-1948 Palestinians, but it is also because diasporic women are sometimes considered by men from Palestine to be too strong and independent to adequately instil Palestinian cultural heritage into their children (Hammer 2005). In this way, women who are disqualified as Palestinian mothers (and therefore wives) on the basis of their diasporic upbringing have been cast out of the imagined space of the national community because they have been socialised outside of the physical space of the national homeland. Belonging to the Palestinian nation is therefore about more than genetic kinship; it is also about the ideas and practices of relatedness, which are defined or adhered to differently between homeland and diaspora (Nash 2005).

In this way, diasporic voices are exposing and complicating the processes by which 'the nation' is (re)produced, as well as complicating the assumed links between identity and place on which these processes draw. However, this is not to say that

nation is unimportant to diasporic populations. Indeed, 'communities' of Palestinians living in parts of Lebanon, Australia, or the US, for example, are important mechanisms of narrating the nation to future generations and therefore of re-membering Palestine and reproducing imaginative attachments to it (Abdulrahim 1996; Cox and Connell 2003; Gibb and Rothenberg 2000). As Hammer (2005) demonstrates, the identities of Palestinians born in what she terms 'exile' are framed by their upbringing and experiences within various Palestinian communities, as well as by historiography and political discourse. Unlike Lindholm Schulz, Hammer does not assume a linear relationship between the years spent away from Palestine and an individual's alienation from Palestine. Instead she recognises the dynamics of diasporic Palestinian consciousness, particularly the processes of memory and re-memory that keep Palestine alive among those who may never have lived there or even visited.

Divya Tolia-Kelly describes re-memory as 'the memories of others as told to you by parents, friends, and absorbed through day-to-day living that are about a sense of self beyond a linear narrative of events, encounters and biographical experiences' (2004a, 316; see also Hirsch 1997). This echoes Anne-Marie Fortier's exploration of collective memory as a performative culture 'in which elements of the past are cobbled together to mould a communal body of belonging. It is a place where individual lives, present and past, are called upon to inhabit the present space, to "member it"' (1999, 59). From this perspective Palestinian social re- or post-memory can be understood as an accumulation and mobilisation of historical experiences, which imaginatively and creatively (re)produce a narrative of 'the national past' that reinforce certain modes of Palestinian identity and notions of homeland belonging. This is a dynamic process of both remembering and forgetting, which can privilege official political discourses and strategies (Swedenberg 1991). Nevertheless, Palestinian re-memory of 'received' historical events such as *al Nakba* publicly inscribes the history of Palestinian oppression and resistance 'as a resource for the centring of self through the past' (Tolia-Kelly 2004a, 316; see also Sa'di and Abu Lughod 2007). Pratt describes this as a 'cascade of trauma' from generation to generation, as children listen to parents' and grandparents' stories, or as they note the silences and evasions in these stories and take it upon themselves to explore Palestinian history for themselves, perhaps devoting

their university degree to it. These are home-making strategies insofar as they are processes 'of venturing out and gathering together loose threads of biography scattered [across the world] in order to unify one's life story and to find the resources to rebel against alienating experiences' (Pratt with UNKPSC/FCYA 2003, 44).

The point here is that diasporic life is a means of both destabilising and reproducing imaginaries of nation and that we should not be too quick to trumpet diaspora as the 'extra-national term' that will liberate identity from constraints of place and manufactured coherence (Gilroy 1997). Moreover, within the expanding field of diaspora scholarship, diasporas and diasporic communities are frequently labelled by their national 'origins' (e.g. Palestinian, Iranian, Indian etc.), which reinstates nation as the primary mode of identification and undermines arguments on how diasporic life is engendering more complex symbolic and practical connections. It is therefore necessary to more robustly decentre nation as the dominant mode of groupness and begin to think about the many other ways in which people create 'common ground' over a range of distances.

Diasporic 'communities'?

Community is a word that appears frequently in literature on diasporic populations, possibly because of the diverse connotations that it carries. At first glance, community implies a certain level of sameness among people, shared values, cultures and interests leading to a sense of commonality and therefore communality (see Bauman 2001). This, however, is less a description of group belonging than an ideal of it. As Young argues, such imaginaries of community express 'an urge to unity […] a longing for harmony among persons, for consensus and mutual understanding' (Young 1990, 229). For Young, the desired harmony expressed in the term 'community' is fundamentally exclusionary and ultimately unproductive because it emphasises the differences *between* groups while suppressing differences *within* those groups, as well as within the subjects who claim belonging to them. While such critiques do resonate with dominant discourses of national identity and multicultural policymaking (Alexander et al 2007), it is also important to acknowledge the potential inclusiveness of community: as a mode of togetherness that is open to Others or as a way of living in which people are bonded by difference itself (Ahmed and Fortier 2003).

These conceptualisations of community all circulate around constructions of sameness and difference as interrelated: the boundaries of self and group identity that define 'us' simultaneously define 'them', which immediately raises questions of belonging. In this way, community and identity are part of the same practical processes by which people make sense of themselves and their place in the world through their relationships with those around them (Young 1990; Revill 1993). Bauman dismisses these processes simply as 'collective insurance' by which fearful individuals cluster anxiously into groups (2001, 16). This casts individuals as preceding the social group and ignores the fact that identities are forged not only in fear and vulnerability, but also in love, sadness, travel and story-telling (Young 1990; Anderson 1991). Missing, too, are the moral obligations and expectations that often come with notions of community belonging, which may be as repressive and parochial as they are supportive and enlightened (Revill 1993; Hetherington 1998).

One starting point for addressing these issues is by reconceptualising community as a space of engagement rather than a discrete quality or possessable thing. As Ahmed and Fortier suggest, if we think of community 'as 'common ground' rather than commonality, we might think of communities as effects of how we meet on the ground, as a ground that is material, but also virtual, real and imaginary' (2003, 257). Although this still emphasises sameness, the notion of members of communities being on 'common ground' recognises the primacy of connections among people in the formation of social groups and that this particular patch of ground may be just one of several occupied by a person at any given time. Moreover, to conceive of communities as 'effects of how we meet on the ground' shifts attention from competing definitions of community to the processes by which something called 'community' is named, stabilised and invested with meaning, and to how these formations evolve.

Alexander et al (2007) also want to go beyond abstract constructions of neatly-bounded communities that assume 'a homology between individual and group identities' (p790), reinforcing idealized imaginaries of homogeneity, national identity and multicultural integration, and ignoring the complexities of social groups discussed at the beginning of this section. Following Stuart Hall, the authors argue for more attention to the 'messier contours and intersections of individuals and groups at the

level of everyday life' (p788). What emerges from such attention are the situated, complex and contingent 'personal communities' that colour people's everyday lives and that vary according to gender, age, migration history and personality. These are networks of neighbours, family and friends, linked by shared histories, trajectories and experiences that traverse, fragment and transcend dominant representations of collective identity. Like Ahmed and Fortier's reconceptualisation of community as 'common ground', personal communities are lived rather than imagined; they are 'embodied in ties of emotion, trust and security' and are 'inhabited and enacted in the practices of everyday life' (Alexander et al 2007, 788 and 790).

Kinship and friendship are two interrelated examples of such communities that are relevant to this thesis. In a straightforward sense, migrants may draw upon family networks for practical support, as I have already discussed. In a broader sense, family helps to mark the boundaries of the social group itself and kin-language helps to emphasise the importance of certain social relationships: the 'community' itself may be mostly comprised of kin-based networks and people's experiences of a supportive and caring ethnic community are sometimes cast in pseudo-familial terms (Alexander et al 2007). Ghabra's (1987) elaboration of nested networks of 'effective' and 'extended' blood relatives, which overlap with social ('nonfamily') networks, also shows how interrelated practices of kinship and friendship are at work among Palestinians in Kuwait: he presents the 'borders' of each network as firmly delineated along blood lines but recounts stories that demonstrate the wide range of reciprocal kin resources at work.

This suggests that the bonds (and divisions) among biogenetic relatives are similar to (if not the same as) those operating among friends: 'Cousins who had feuded in the sending village decided to make peace [in Kuwait]. Distant cousins who had not interacted very often in the village shared the same room' (1987, 72). Thus 'kin connections' (and disconnections) may be seen as just one of the 'myriad and quotidian ways in which people divide their social universe' (Edwards and Strathern 2000, 161). A common mistake, however, is to read kinship as a more powerful social relationship than friendship or to take the use of familial language to describe friends as elevating the significance of that 'chosen' relationship. This ignores the affective power of

friendship and the ways in which it is already a quality of kin relatedness and other social relationships, such as when siblings, cousins and other relatives 'feel the bonds of their relationships', or when colleagues get on together (Carrier 1999, 21; also Bell and Coleman 1999). This 'choice' to be close to people with whom one is thrown together is indicated by the extra care and commitment to nurturing these connections beyond what is expected (Pahl 2000).

Friendship is a powerful but under-researched force among migrating groups, whose family connections are more often the subject of study (Svašek 2008). As Conradson and Latham (2005) have shown, friendship networks play an important role in spurring and supporting the movement of young, professional New Zealanders to London. Drawn by a shared attraction of casual employment, European travel and the excitement of living in a 'World City', friends who shared their university years often follow one another to London, where they live and mostly socialise together. This not only centralises friendship as an organising force in certain cultures of mobility but demonstrates how social embeddedness can be the motivation for rather than the price of migration. For those who migrate under different circumstances, friends made in a new place may provide assistance and advice about jobs, housing and services in a similar way to kin, and the endurance and expansion of these connections may constitute a kind of personal community. Such friendships are often based on shared culture or background and, for those travelling alone or as a small unit, they may also be a source of emotional support and substitute for family (Alexander et al 2007).

In addition to kinship and friendship, language provides another avenue into this terrain of common ground and personal communities, as it is both a marker of dominant discourses of belonging as well as a situated, complex and contingent agent of personal and collective identity. Among diasporic groups, language is often considered key to the maintenance of cultural tradition across generations and among family over distance (Bhabha 1994; Rumbaut 2002). This dominant view is also advanced by Portes and Rumbaut who argue that shared language is the means by which 'individuals learn to identify each other as members of the same bounded cultural communities', creating a sense of 'we-ness' that is intensified by shared accents within languages and evocations of a 'common historical past' (2001, 113; see also

Fortier 2000; Hammer 2005). They acknowledge the contested politics of language learning between parents and children, particularly the difficulties of enforcing 'foreign' languages within the house and battling the slow creep of English into domestic conversation. They also emphasise that all language-learning is incomplete but that this can be a source of support as well as struggle as family members with different skills fill in the gaps.

A key problem with this view is that it treats languages as bounded and internally coherent cultural objects, rather than as indefinite, heterogeneous fields of practice that intersect with other aspects of communicative and embodied life. Alexander et al (2007), for example, have shown how quickly imagined correlations between language and nationality or ethnicity break down. Melissa Butcher (2008) has also demonstrated how language intersects with other attributes in the construction of difference and belonging among ethnic minorities in Australia. In one sense, speaking languages other than English was seen to operate alongside food, shared rituals and beliefs in the construction of minority 'community' belonging, as well as enabling greater empathy for other people's experiences. In another sense, however, feeling 'Australian' in oneself was not just about speaking English but about speaking English in particular ways, with particular turns of phrase, while being considered 'Australian' by others was limited by racialised discourses of national belonging: 'No matter how long you've lived here or how well you speak the language, you're still going to be Cambodian-Chinese, an Asian' (Butcher 2008, 377).

What all of this demonstrates is that thinking about communities as the idiosyncratic effects of meeting up generates new ways of understanding how people construct identities and social groups, by situating often prioritised connections (such as language and kinship) in relation to often ignored connections (such as friendship). Focusing on the ties between people and how these ties draw on, challenge and transcend dominant modes of community and collective identity reveals much about the everyday ways in which people live their own communities and identities in diasporic contexts that may relate to but also go beyond feelings of national collectivity and homeland rootedness. Individual practices and perspectives are crucial to this endeavour but always in relation to wider forces of collectivity and belonging:

individuals and individual identity are partly constituted by social groups and collective identity in multiple, fluid and shifting ways, and understanding this process requires attention to the affective and personal means by which people construct their place in the world, and how these intersect with dominant modes of national and cultural belonging.

My third research question is designed to pursue these issues by asking how belonging to social groups contributes to identity and home. Specifically, it investigates how collective identity is imagined and practised, how being Palestinian overlaps with other collective identities, and how cultures of family and home figure in social relationships in ways that challenge, manipulate and reinforce them.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have outlined my approach to diasporic identity through three key themes of house/home, family and social groups. Firstly, I have shown how spatial imaginaries of home, homeland and nation intersect with everyday spatial practices of memory and domestic life in the production of rootedness, belonging and identity. Secondly, I have shown how an engagement with cultures and practices of relatedness reveals links between kinship and rootedness within Palestinian society and how thinking relatedness and identity together enables a greater understanding of the continued relevance of family and place within the historical and social contexts of diasporic Palestinian lives. Thirdly, I have shown that paying attention to the ties between people reveals the personality, complexity and contingency of social group construction, which draw on, challenge and transcend dominant modes of collective belonging, such as nation.

In the course of these discussions I have sought to show how domestic space, family and social groups operate in interrelated ways as forms of diasporic dwelling: modes of being in the world for those whose emotional, practical and imaginative attachments are dispersed over a range of distances. Indeed, I have used house/home, family and social groups as coordinates of 'being diasporic' because these spaces, practices, relationships (as well as the ideas and feelings surrounding them) are key to the everyday ways in which people live in dispersed ways. As with diasporic identity,

house/home, family and social groups operate through an implicit tension between stability and fluidity, sameness and *différance*, in which they draw on established social, political, cultural and spiritual norms, expectations and practices, through and against which they are created anew by personal experiences, perspectives and practices.

Research questions

I will develop these arguments in the following chapters based on the thoughts and experiences of Palestinians in Britain. The three themes of house/home, family and social groups discussed in this literature review correspond with the three primary research questions around which the main chapters of this thesis are organised. The table below (Table 1, p. 60) sets out the research questions and sub-questions in full. These questions have been designed to explore how house/home, family and social groups contribute to sense of identity among Palestinians in Britain. Specifically, the questions pay attention to the shared and individual ideas, practices, relationships and spaces that enable Palestinian dwelling, and how these are challenged, manipulated and reinforced in a diasporic context.

The first question explores the links between house and home for Palestinians in Britain, focusing on everyday practices, domestic spaces and material objects, as well as varying articulations of home between languages and people. The second question concerns how family figures in the everyday lives of Palestinians in Britain. It investigates the specific ideas and practices at work in the doing of Palestinian family relatedness, how these contribute to sense of home for those living in Britain but also how they have shifted in the process of migration. The third and final question addresses the relationships between social groups, identity and home by probing the range of collective identities open to Palestinians in Britain and how cultures of family and home figure in social relationships.

1. How are houses and senses of home linked for Palestinians in Britain?

- *How do people produce a sense of home in their everyday lives?*
- *In what ways do domestic spaces and material objects contribute to feelings of being at home in Britain?*
- *How do articulations of home vary between languages, as well as between people of different genders, generations and migration histories?*

2. How does family figure in the everyday lives of Palestinians in Britain?

- *What practices, behaviours and expectations are involved in the doing of Palestinian family relatedness?*
- *How do feelings and practices of family relatedness contribute to senses of home?*
- *How are feelings and practices of family relatedness influenced by living in Britain?*

3. How does belonging to social groups contribute to identity and home?

- *How is collective identity imagined and practised among Palestinians in Britain?*
- *How does being Palestinian overlap with other collective identities?*
- *How do cultures of family and home figure in social relationships and how are they challenged, manipulated and/or reinforced in diasporic life?*

Table 1: Research questions

These three questions correspond with the three main chapters of this thesis. Chapter four, on the spaces and practices of *al beit* examines participants' experiences of and feelings about their houses, and the practices that bring them to life. This includes the intersections, confrontations and adaptations between physical domestic spaces and family practices, and how these feature in the (re)production of different kinds of identities among Palestinians in Britain. Chapter five on the geographies of Palestinian families concerns how participants negotiate being part of a dispersed family, including the changing meanings of family across distances, as well as the

spaces and practices through which participants produce and maintain feelings of relatedness in a diasporic context. Chapter six examines the dynamics of social groups and collective identity among Palestinians in Britain, particularly the overlaps and fissures between multiple identities and the wider range of ideas and the conversational practices through which Palestinian social relatedness is enacted. In preparation for these discussions, I will set out the methodological rationale guiding this project and the process of conducting research among Palestinians in Britain.

3 RESEARCHING PALESTINIAN VOICES

This chapter explains the methodological rationale and process of conducting research among Palestinians in Britain, from its foundations in critical theory to the specificities of working with families as groups in their own houses. The first section engages with the ontological and epistemological principles that guide my research practice and constitute my research ethics. Indeed, a separate ethics section is deliberately omitted from this chapter because such considerations pervade my research thinking and conduct, and I signal my ethical concerns throughout the chapter. Following this theoretical exploration I outline how key aspects of the research were carried out, including recruitment, logistics, group and individual interview methods, cycles of reflection and feedback, and general security concerns. In the third section I discuss in more detail the technique of group interviews and the dynamics of working with families in their own houses. The final section briefly introduces the participants and my ethics of representation, including the mechanisms employed to ensure anonymity and my strategy for introducing participants more fully throughout the thesis.

Theoretical foundations

In reviewing the literature on diasporic identity, house/home, family and social groups, I demonstrated my concern with three broad theoretical issues: notions of identity and home as situated and processual; perspectives and experiences that differ from dominant Palestinian discourses; and the individual and collective, gendered and generational variations in diasporic identity formation. The ontological and epistemological principles guiding my exploration of these issues are drawn from post-structural and feminist postcolonial theory. In this section I discuss the particular importance of decolonising methodologies and seek to situate myself within a particular social and political field in relation to the participants in my research.

Decolonising methodologies

Postcolonialism refers to the productive tensions between the temporal and the critical aftermath of colonialism; between 'a period of time *after* colonialism' and those 'cultures, discourses and critiques that lie *beyond*, but remain closely influenced by, colonialism' (Blunt and McEwan 2002, 3 original emphasis; see also McClintock 1995). Postcolonial scholars are thus deeply concerned with the historic and continuing circulation of colonial power relations through discourses of race, gender, sexuality and domesticity, as well as with voices and knowledges that have been subjugated by (racialised) colonial and postcolonial power relations (see Blunt 2005a; Stoler 1995). Many scholars thus seek to privilege 'Other' perspectives that have previously been excluded from academic knowledge by such power relations in order to decentre or 'provincialize' European ways of knowing (Chakrabarty 2000).

Given Palestine's history of Roman, Byzantine, Ottoman, British and now Israeli colonisation, as well as the experiences of refugees in various 'host countries', there are various ways in which Palestinians can and cannot be read as a silenced and marginalised Other. Firstly, Palestinians are awkwardly situated within the Arab world, with many regimes hesitating to provide material support and some taking steps to restrict their freedom of action in the face of widespread popular support for the Palestinian struggle (Farsoun 1973; Karmi 2002). There is also a deep and abiding prejudice in the West towards Arabs and Islam, which in the early twentieth century enabled the League of Nations and the British Mandatory government to favour Zionist ambitions over Palestinian desires for statehood (Said 1992). This continues to play out in contemporary news coverage of the Middle East, as Israeli scholars are more frequently called on to speak about and for Palestine and the Palestinians, than Palestinians themselves (Said 1984; 1978; Philo and Berry 2004). In other ways, however, Palestinians are neither silent nor marginalised. Palestinians are a famously well-educated population; many are fluent in numerous European languages as a result of their diasporic experiences and are in an excellent position to communicate with audiences beyond the Arab world (Abu Lughod 2000; Karmi 2002). Also, the sustained resistance to Israeli occupation demonstrates a determination among Palestinians to

'involve themselves in their own representation in ways that do not accord with the lines laid down by official institutional structures' (see Spivak 1996, 306).

The body of academic research on Palestinians that has emerged in recent years has sought to expand the range of Palestinian voices, particularly those of women and those living in diasporic contexts, in accordance with postcolonial epistemologies (Karmi 2002; Taraki 2006a). However, as discussed in chapter one, there remains a trend towards the colonisation of Palestinian identity by ostensibly quintessential characteristics and experiences (see Khalidi 1992; Lindholm Schulz 2003). For Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999), decolonising academic knowledge involves not only the deconstruction of Western scholarship by those who were the objects of its research; that is, by indigenous peoples telling their own stories of being studied. It also involves indigenous researchers producing their own knowledge and doing so from a position that is 'grounded politically in specific indigenous contexts and histories, struggles and ideals' (Smith 1999, 4). Although Palestinian experiences differ from 'indigenous' struggles elsewhere in the world, Smith's arguments should nevertheless inspire academics to question the modes and motives of their research, and to consider what their projects are 'worth' beyond intellectual curiosity and their own career paths.

These issues have been at the forefront of my thinking about this research project. My most enduring concern is around using the term 'Palestinian' at all. In one sense I am troubled by the circularity of attempting to investigate the construction of 'being Palestinian' by inviting people who already identify as Palestinian to participate (see Research process, below). In a related but broader sense I am also troubled by how writing about 'Palestinians' assumes the existence of such a group as a more or less coherent entity and effaces competing, contested and changing versions of what 'being Palestinian' means, even while attempting to explore those very complexities (Cornwall and Jewkes 1995; Pain and Francis 2003). These concerns echo Anne McClintock's suspicions about 'bogus universals', such as 'the postcolonial other' or 'the postcolonial woman'. Similarly, Chandra Mohanty (1991) argues in relation to Western feminist discourse that these kinds of codifications are in fact appropriations that 'colonize' third world subjects.

Referring to 'Palestinians' tacitly homogenises what it means to be Palestinian, colonising the pluralities of Palestinian experiences and, in this research context, risks constructing British-based Palestinians as a unitary and cohesive group. More than orientalist categorisations, these are also political designations within the struggle for Palestinian national autonomy, which efface difference for the sake of effective political mobilisation (see Butler 1999). Participants in this research were keenly aware of these issues of representation and their power to shape them, as the interview extract quoted in the introduction demonstrates. Ilyas's comment about the possibilities of doing 'very many PhDs' simply on the topic of Palestinian accents, as well as the accompanying laughter, signalled this self-consciousness about the research process itself and their desires to shape representations of Palestinians. This awareness was sometimes articulated by other participants in comments gently mocking the very idea of 'researching Palestinians' and the embarrassing generalisations I might make based on individual opinions, while other times participants attempted to actively direct my research according to their own representational agenda. By taking a post-structural and feminist postcolonial approach, I explore the complex meanings of what it means to be individually and collectively Palestinian in order to advance a more inclusive representational politics that also recognises the difficulties of talking about 'Palestinians' at all. In doing so I am informed by post-structuralist conceptualisations of 'subjectivity' and 'identity', which call attention to the positionalities of *all* those involved in the research process.

Decentering subjectivities

Broadly speaking, post-structuralism rejects the notion of an essential logic or structure shaping and constraining the activities and conscious designs of human subjects (Gregory 2000). As such, there is no fixed relationship between a signifying text, image or sound and the concept it signifies, instead *difference* and *relationality* determine the meaning of a signifier. Identity is thus created through difference and relationships to a constitutive outside, an 'Other' (see Gilroy 1997; Hall 1990; 1996). Difference here is not a stable essence (post-structuralism rejects the very concept of a unified, knowing and rational subject), rather subjects are seen as in a continual process of becoming and subjectivity is considered a site of disunity, conflict and

contradictions, which destabilises overarching, structuralist explanations in favour of multiple, situated subjectivities (Haraway 1991; Pratt 2000). Such ideas have helped to challenge the inherent masculinism of intellectual thought, which is founded on the notion of a rational, objective, coherent thinking subject (Grosz 1993).

These ideas refer to both the researcher and the researched, since academics are in the process of their own becoming within their own socio-economic, political and professional context. We must therefore be reflexive in our empirical and written work, that is, we must reflect on our own positionality as researchers in self-conscious, self-critical ways (England 1994). The emphasis here is on being self-critical throughout the research process, rather than inserting a 'reflexive bit' after the introduction and then continuing to elaborate the 'view from nowhere' (Haraway 1991; see also Bourdieu 2000). Instead we must deploy a critical reflexivity or 'strong objectivity' in order to understand the location of both the objects and subjects of knowledge-making practices (Haraway 1997:37). As Gayatri Spivak argues, Western theorists should be marked or mark themselves with their positionality as thinking subjects. Too often, she argues, European intellectuals conceal themselves: they are neither Subject nor subject of their studies, appearing only as commentators who 'report on the nonrepresented subject and analyze (without analyzing) the workings of (the unnamed Subject irreducibly presupposed by) power and desire' (1988, 279).

At the same time, researchers should not presume to fully know or understand themselves or their influence on the research, which would constitute another god trick (Rose 1997). All reflections are partial, as all aspects of the known self are not necessarily relevant to the research nor are researchers in control of how 'relevance' is defined. Indeed, reflections may be understood as deliberately selective according to how the main areas of difference and sameness are perceived to influence the research process. This ability to identify the incidence, meaning and significance of difference and similarity is part of the researcher's power, along with other privileges of delineating the research project and interpreting the data (Ramazanoglu 2002).

My understanding of power is that it is exercised rather than possessed. Power is not applied, rather it functions as part of a chain, circulating through individuals, who are both constituted by power (they are power-effects) and able to exercise power

themselves (they are power-relays) (Foucault 1997). Difference and sameness (as well as power) are thus continuously negotiated between participants and researcher, often through shifting ideas about insiders and outsiders that are partly in the hands of participants and with unpredictable effects. Indeed, for a researcher to be designated as an outsider means in one sense to be cast outside boundaries of trust, similarity and belonging by participants; to be the excluded and disempowered within a research relationship (Mohammad 2001). However, outsider status can also provide a productive starting point from which to be drawn or welcomed into a group, as expectations are low and inclusion is seen as part of educational development (Kearns 2000; Laurier 2003). Being an insider is not without problems either, as one may fail to meet certain expectations (such as cultural or linguistic knowledgeability) or may be seen as betraying the community by researching and representing participants in a particular way (Roseneil 1993).

Reflexivity for me involves thinking through my positionality as a young, mixed-race, non-Palestinian woman conducting research with Palestinians of different genders, ages, and racial and migratory backgrounds. In one sense I am an 'outsider' to the Palestinians with whom I worked, as I have no Arab or Palestinian heritage, nor any religious connection to the Middle East. However, I was also an 'insider' to the questions of home and identity under discussion with participants. Having been born in England, to a white English mother and a Singaporean father, and then raised in Scotland, my sense of self and belonging are split: Scotland is home but I am routinely cast by others as English, and although I have no love for Singapore I reluctantly experienced a sense of belonging on a recent visit. This is compounded by my sense of Canada as a second homeland, as well as the Canadian accent I picked up during my time there. Although my transnational identity is by no means equivalent to Palestinian experiences of dispossession and dispersal, my complicated sense of belonging has resonated with previous Palestinians research participants, who have turned to their friends and said 'she understands'. My commitment to Palestine also situates me as a friend, although experience advises against assuming that trust and confidence automatically flow from shared political cause (Long 2006).

What all of this demonstrates is that difference (racial, gender, age, class or otherwise) should not be seen as an uncrossable boundary, rather we should work with and through any mutually-recognised differences, respecting them, whilst taking responsibility for differential power relations they carry with them (Gunaratnam 2003; Skelton 2001). Such constructions and negotiations of perceived difference are not obstacles but productive forces in critical research, particularly for feminist scholars, whose research is often closely tied to desires for political solidarity through and across the myriad differences (of race, sexuality, (dis)ability, religion, age, culture, class etc.) that are opened up by concern for women's experiences (Butler 1999; Cape 2002; Pratt 2004). This concern for difference, alongside other post-structural and feminist postcolonial concerns for power, subjectivity and positionality in the production of knowledge, have been a constant inspiration to decentre the methodological and analytical decision-making in my research and to persistently seek a non-exploitative relationship with participants (McDowell 1992). It is to the (attempted and imperfect) implementation of these methodological ethics that I now turn.

Research process

Seventeen people took part in this research; thirteen as part of family groups and four as individuals (see Table 2, p. 70). The research involved repeat group and individual interviews with participants, usually in their own houses, over the course of fourteen months. A repeat interview strategy was chosen because it enables a cumulative research process in which the substance of previous discussions feeds into subsequent ones. Each interview was tape-recorded, transcribed and summarised between meetings in order for the discussion and my preliminary analysis to contribute to the research process. Repeat interviews also enable topics to be discussed in greater depth, to 'get beneath the surface' (Thomson 2006, 580), as the recurrence of issues over the course of several meetings provides insight into their significance and allows for the meanings of such issues to be more fully explored. For a single researcher, this deeper engagement and cyclical research process are only sustainable with a small number of participants, hence the research sample was to be kept below ten. This was not difficult since the snowball recruitment strategy yielded a small number of

participating family groups, as I discuss below. I therefore expanded my methods during fieldwork to include individual interviews. This combination of methods proved extremely productive, as it enabled me to explore the collective dynamics by which home, family and identity are constructed, debated and challenged, while also engaging in-depth with individual experiences and perspectives. Individual and group interviews also emphasise broader arguments of this thesis around the co-constitution of individual subjects and social groups, and the collaborative production of knowledge and memory.

The central strategy of all interviews was in-depth conversation, although a selection of other techniques were used in different situations. Firstly, I conducted a small number of 'home tours', in which I sought to follow Parr's (1999) detailed home interviews by inviting participants to show me around parts of their house and talk about the significance of different spaces and objects. These were principally restricted to the public spaces of the house, such as living rooms, dining rooms and kitchens, which I spent time in before, during and after the interview and it felt intrusive to request access to more private spaces. Also, moving around was disruptive to the interview and difficult to record. I therefore reworked this strategy into the interview itself, posing questions about rooms and objects I had seen, as well as inviting reflection on the use and significance of more private spaces. Early in the research process I also piloted a mapping exercise in which participants were to annotate a 1946 map of Palestine (see Appendix B) with the family names they knew to be associated with particular places. As I discuss in chapter six, participants' difficulty in carrying out this exercise suggested that it was an inappropriate way to get at the knowledge of family geographies and I did not pursue it further. Although visual methods have been mobilised in other studies to yield rich insights into the material geographies and emotional significances of home (for example Tolia-Kelly 2004b; Rose 2003), I deliberately employed no visual techniques beyond this mapping exercise. I did so out of consideration for potential feelings of surveillance (see Security, below), but equally because I aim to convey stories through speech and text in ways that can be more vivid and emotionally rich than pictures.

Participants	Relationships	*Non-participating family*	Patrilineal surname	Matrilineal surname	Interview size	Number of meetings
Amina	-	*Burhan (husband)*	-	Idilbi	1	2
Fu'ad	-	*Emily (wife)*	Habayib	-	1	2
Tayyib	-	*Isabel (wife)*	Rifa'iyya	-	1	2
Jameel	-	*Helene (wife/mother)* *Layla (daughter)*	Nuweihad	-	1	2
Tawfiq Wadad	Husband Wife	*Saleem (elder son)* *Ghazi (younger son)*	Al Mazini	Nasrallah	2	3
Ilfat Maryam*	Mother Daughter	*Yusuf (elder son)* *Akram (younger son)*	Shaheen	Ăzzam	2	3
Faruq Noura* Zaki	Father Eldest daughter Eldest son	*Lutfiyya (wife/mother)*	Al Rimawi	Badr	3	3
Ilyas Nawal Alifa Ibrahim Liana Mai	Father Mother Eldest daughter Son-in-law Middle daughter Youngest daughter	-	Haniyyah	Jabra	6	1

Table 2: Anonymised overview of interview composition, size and number of meetings

(*Maryam and Noura are friends)

There were three broad stipulations for involvement in my research. Firstly, all participants should be over the age of sixteen as I did not have ethical clearance to work with those classified as children. Secondly, participants must identify in some way as Palestinian, regardless of any mixed marriages in their family history, how long ago they had left Palestine or whether they had lived there at all. Thirdly, at least two people from different generations of the family must participate in order to provide a range of age-perspectives. These criteria were intended to be inclusive, while fulfilling requirements for meaningful group interviews. However, they also curtailed the sample in unforeseen ways.

For example, the call for 'Palestinians' effectively excluded non-Palestinian family members who may have had valuable cross-cultural perspectives on the meaning of home, family and identity. Three male participants whom I interviewed individually (Fu'ad, Jameel, Tayyib) are married to European women (Emily, Helene, Isabel). These cases offered opportunities to explore the gender politics of Palestinian identity as they seemed to confirm arguments about the greater acceptability of Palestinian men marrying non-Palestinian women, as discussed in the previous chapter (Hammer 2005). There was also potential to explore the politics of identity reproduction within a mixed household and to investigate how perspectives on home and family may shift in cross-cultural contexts. I was particularly keen to hear from Isabel, who studied Arabic and Islamic studies, is fluent in Arabic and has become Muslim during her marriage to Tayyib. However, despite my invitations and their reported interest in the research none of these women participated. A possible explanation in the cases of Jameel and Tayyib is that they were recruited as individual participants rather than as family groups. However, Fu'ad was contacted on the basis of group participation and his wife, Emily, did join us for part of the first interview. She was recovering from illness at the time we met and during the interview she went upstairs to rest but did not rejoin us, nor did she participate in subsequent interviews. On reflection, the interview design was heavily Palestinian-oriented and I could have done more to rephrase questions to include Emily.

I attempted to compensate for the absence of cross-cultural perspectives by raising the politics of mixed marriages and the gendered dynamics of identity reproduction

during interviews. However, this often generated more tension than insight, as some participants would dismiss issues of gender and suggestions of patriarchy in their keenness to portray Palestinian society as modern and progressive (see Hasso 1998). Similar tensions emerged around class. As I discuss below, the snowball recruitment strategy yielded a research sample composed largely of middle-class professionals. Although several participants within this sample spoke openly of wider social differences, others sought to portray Palestine as a classless society, seemingly in order to bolster claims to modernity and nationhood.

Having sketched the broad contours of my research methods, in the following sections I explain my rationale for and experience of various aspects of the research process, including recruitment strategy, the logistics and design of group and individual interviews, the cyclical process of feedback and reflection and how I addressed various security issues.

Recruitment

Snowballing was the primary method of recruiting participants to this research. Trust was central to the success of this project, which involved repeat interviews in people's houses and sought to open up very personal experiences and feelings about family, home and identity. Moreover, the political sensitivity of any research with Palestinians means that being vouched for by contacts can be vital to gaining access. Wadad described being cautiously approached by our mutual friend: 'she said to me, um, you know, "don't worry. There's nothing to worry about from Joanna". […] That's the first thing she said'. At the same time, however, snowballing involves some risk that people will be pressured or misled into participating. For example, one contact whom I did not know personally apparently wrote 'a very good letter' about me to potential participants saying 'don't let this student down'. This had given one participant the false impression that I knew this man and that he was also a participant, which discomforted me.

Despite this risk, snowballing remained the most appropriate and ethically-sound recruitment strategy as it draws on personal networks and recommendations that help to establish vital relationships of trust with a largely 'hidden' research population (Browne 2005). Where a participant was contacted through more distant means they sometimes employed their own screening strategies. For example, I contacted Fu'ad

through the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and when I travelled to see him, he met me at the train station and took me for lunch in the town centre before proceeding back to his house for the interview itself. Having talked to him several times by telephone it was good to get to know him in person. This lunch also seemed to be an opportunity for him to get to know me and perhaps feel more confident inviting me into his house.

I began the snowballing process by writing to contacts established through my MA research with Palestinian students, including a detailed information sheet explaining the research, which they were invited to forward to potentially interested parties. My research experience suggests that such detailed explanations are more effective than brief, general descriptions, given the often acute political engagement of many in my target population and/or their justified suspicion of any research on Palestine or with Palestinians (Long 2006). However, it was useful to provide a condensed version in the body of an email that might prompt people to read the detailed attachment and could easily be forwarded to others.

As a non-random sampling method, snowballing reveals information about social networks (Browne 2005). Although participants had many different experiences of leaving Palestine, they were primarily middle-class professionals whose families had come to Britain through postgraduate education or skilled work, suggesting that social networks are linked to shared status. I attempted to diversify the research sample through a geographical spread of participants between the south-east and north-west of England, where my previous research found the Palestinian population to be roughly clustered (Long 2006). Snowballing also raises issues about 'gatekeepers', particularly the politics of how potential participants are identified and how my project was represented to them (Cloke et al 2004, 156). I was regularly asked what 'kind' of Palestinian I wanted to speak to and I was careful to emphasise that I sought a wide range of experiences in order to explore different perspectives.

I also drew on connections with the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) to send out a call for participants through their monthly email to members. I chose this organisation rather than other Palestinian organisations in Britain, such as the Palestine Forum of Britain (PFB) and the Association of the Palestinian Community in the UK (APC-UK). Firstly, I am known within PSC, having regularly volunteered in the

London office for several years, and I have many people to vouch for me to potential participants. Secondly, I regard the broad-based solidarity politics pursued by PSC as less divisive than the PFB or APC-UK, which are roughly aligned with Hamas and Fatah, respectively. Although this meant that I foreclosed my research to participants who disagreed with the PSC's mission and methods, this was preferable to appearing aligned with a particular party and the project being crippled by internal Palestinian politics (see Long 2006). However, I did eventually draw upon contacts associated with the PFB as a last resort during fieldwork when the number of participating families had apparently peaked at four.

The slowness of snowballing as a recruitment method meant that this was an ongoing process throughout most of fieldwork. Emails and telephone calls to a range of organisations often came to nothing. Also, gatekeepers sometimes failed to fulfil their promises to put me in touch with potential participants. However, these pitfalls were outweighed by the rewards of a recommendation-based recruitment method, as evidenced by the rich conversations I had with a small number of interested, informed and committed families and individuals.

Logistics

All but one interview[4] was recorded using two microcassette dictaphones and a table-top microphone. This ensured that there were two recordings in case one was faulty or of poor sound quality. Also, by turning on one dictaphone a little after the other I captured parts of the conversation that would otherwise have been lost when tapes were being turned over. The effectiveness of this system relied on the microphone and dictaphones being properly connected and switched on. However, the considerable bustle surrounding the start of an interview, particularly with a family and in their own house, often distracted me and led to many recording errors. Only once, early in fieldwork, was a large part of a conversation lost. Fortunately I was able to revisit the lost topics in later interviews.

There were few language issues during fieldwork. All participants spoke excellent English, possibly because less proficient candidates were deselected by gatekeepers. Also, my information sheet was written in English and my contacts knew of my limited

[4] Fu'ad declined to be recorded.

Arabic skills, which also implied that interviews would be taking place in English and that a reasonable grasp of the language was required. No-one would have been excluded on the basis of language and, if a family member did speak limited English, I would have keenly observed the dynamics of interpretation by other group members as part of family dynamics and the social production of knowledge (Pratt 2002). Although this was ultimately unnecessary, my own speaking and translating abilities were useful in two senses. Firstly, participants were often impressed by my pronunciation skills and the fact that I had studied Arabic at Birzeit University in Palestine, which contributed to our personal rapport (see Smith 2003). Secondly, in some interviews participants would pepper their speech with Arabic phrases or talk among themselves in Arabic. I transcribed this dialogue as far as was audible and translated what I understood. The context of the discussion often filled in any gaps in my understanding and participants were also invited to check each transcription.

These recording and linguistic issues were minor in comparison to the logistics of scheduling the interviews themselves, particularly where they involved bringing together many members of the same family, all with busy lives and sometimes living in different parts of the country. Having expected to work around these things, I found it helpful to arrange the next meeting date at the end of each interview, usually at intervals of six weeks. This was particularly effective with participants outside London with whom I could coordinate several meetings in a single trip. Indeed, weekends were most convenient for group interviews, whereas all individual interviews conducted in London took place on weekday evenings and, with only two parties to coordinate, could be conducted at very short notice.

Summer holidays, Ramadan and Gaza had the unanticipated effect of bringing research to a halt for most of August and September 2008 and January 2009. Firstly, the slowness of snowball recruiting meant that by June I had only conducted three interviews with three different families. This ruled out meeting again six weeks later since many people were on holiday in August. Secondly, the majority of my participants were Muslim and they were busy with Ramadan events throughout September. These two factors combined to create a long hiatus that disrupted the momentum of the research, although I did use this time to interview Fu'ad, a Christian

participant, and it also provided an incentive to organise meetings more regularly once we reconnected. The third interruption came from the Israeli assault on Gaza in December 2008 and January 2009. Politically active families and individuals were often involved in public demonstrations and lobbying campaigns, which made it difficult to meet up. Moreover, many participants had relatives or friends in Gaza and it was inappropriate to contact them to discuss my research during this difficult time.

In only one instance was I unable to meet with a family, the Haniyyahs, more than once. I had spoken to them in May 2008 and there had been a hiatus of several months for summer holidays and Ramadan. I usually liaised with the youngest daughter, Mai, who I had met at a political demonstration and when I contacted her in October to arrange a second group interview she said they were currently very busy and did not seem keen to arrange meeting up again. She also asked me to explain my research again. I interpreted this as suspicion of my motives and assumed it to have been caused by my failure to send the transcripts for the first group interview as I did not have their postal address. They were also away over the summer and during Ramadan. I sent a contrite letter taking responsibility for the lack of communication and expressing sincere hope that they would continue to participate in the research when they were less busy and asking them to inform me if they wished to withdraw. I enclosed transcripts of our interview and the guides for future group interviews, which I hoped would reassure them. I did subsequently hear from Mai and she assured me that they did not wish to withdraw, they were simply too busy at the present time. We made tentative plans to meet up again, this time only with her and her mother since the others were away, but when she did not respond to subsequent emails it seemed inappropriate to pursue her further.

Group interviews

Group interviews were the primary data-gathering method in this research. Interviews were selected in order to explore personal opinions and experiences (Dwyer and Limb 2001). Group research techniques are premised on the production of knowledge through social interaction and the idea that observing these processes in action will provide a more nuanced understanding of social issues (Cameron 2000; Hoggart et al 2002; Pratt 2002). Thus talking to people in groups has the capacity to reveal the

processes by which social norms are constructed, maintained, legitimised and resisted through and in relation to the multiple meanings and interpretations exercised by individuals (Winchester 2000). I therefore chose to conduct group interviews with families in order to gain insights into the collective memories and lived experiences of home, as well as to observe family dynamics in practice and the potentially contested production of identities.

I had intended to complement these group discussions with individual interviews with the participating family members, but after piloting this strategy with Ilfat and Maryam I decided not to pursue it. This was partly because the interviews did not yield the greater insight into the individual feelings about collective identity that I had expected. This may have been due to the openness and intimacy of Ilfat and Maryam's relationship, which gave our group interviews an unusual depth and left little to be elaborated on in a one-to-one situation. However, significant ethical issues also arose from the pilot. The most serious of these concerned interviewee anonymity and privacy, which could not be guaranteed in the final write-up given my approach to representation. Creating new pseudonyms or anonymous identifiers (e.g. respondent A/B/C) was an inadequate solution as these would be undermined by any connections made between personal and family perspectives, connections which are central to my arguments. Furthermore, the trust and privacy that is vital to in-depth individual interviews was undermined by my speaking to other family members. For me, these ethical issues were insurmountable in a project conducted by a single researcher and I therefore discontinued this combination of methods.

The three group interviews were organised around the themes of family, home and 'community', in that order.[5] This was done to ensure that personal, emotional and potentially challenging questions about home were placed in the middle of the research process, flanked by more open questions oriented towards story-telling and social life. This pattern was repeated within each interview itself, which began with general questions, moved on to potentially sensitive topics and then back to broad, open issues and experiences. All interviews were semi-structured in order to create flexibility for participants to steer the interview towards topics of importance to them (Dunn 2000).

[5] Appendix C provides an overview of interview themes.

Thinking in this way about the flow of questions within and between the three conversations, I chose family as the first topic, inviting participants to tell the story of how they came to Britain and about life as part of a dispersed family. The second interview began with questions about domestic spaces and significant houses in participants' lives, before moving on to ask about the meaning of home both in terms of places and relationships. In preparation for this interview participants were invited to select a significant object or room in the house to talk about. Many forgot to do this and if nothing sprang to their minds I would ask about an object mentioned previously in order to prompt discussion. The final interview was often shorter: usually around an hour or ninety minutes, compared with two to three hours for the previous interviews. This focused on social relationships and 'community' and began by asking about the significance of the question '*min daar miin?*', 'which family are you from?' This familiar topic invigorated the last interview and often led to a lively discussion of the meaning of community and the production of collective Palestinian belonging.

Individual interviews

Individual interviews were structured in a similar way to group discussions, with challenging questions surrounded by less challenging ones. Questions also followed the pattern of family, home and community, which continued to suit the course of conversations. However, given the greater speed and intensity of in-depth individual interviews compared with families, I condensed these three sets of questions into two interviews lasting between ninety-minutes and three hours each. Questions were also internally reordered, often during the interview itself, to maintain the flow of the discussion and to ensure that challenging questions remained concentrated in the centre of each interview.

As discussed above, I combined individual and group research methods partly in order to explore the collective dynamics of home, family and identity alongside individual experiences and perspectives. Indeed, interviews did enable topics to be explored with greater intimacy and intensity than in group situations, eliciting insights into very personal thoughts and feelings that may not have been expressed among other family members. This is not to argue that the collective dynamics and interpersonal struggles between relatives over the meaning of home, family and identity were absent

from individual interviews. Nor do I suggest that individual participants spoke 'free' from or independently of their family relationships. Participants brought these relationships with them to individual discussions and represented differences of opinion through reflections from their own perspective. These portrayals were more obviously partial than those expressed during group interviews. However, participants' interpretations of their own experiences and representations of their own thoughts are no less mediated than my own interpretations of family dynamics playing out in situ. The only difference is a shift in the process of interpretation, which was concentrated in participants' hands before passing over to my analysis.

Cycles

After conducting each interview, I transcribed it, editing out identifying details about the family, particularly names and places as well as other revealing information.[6] I then produced a three to four page summary of the interview outlining major themes and notable points. The aim of this was to share my preliminary analysis, on which I invited participants' comments during the next discussion, and it was also to give participants an idea of what we had talked about if they did not have the time or inclination to read the entire interview transcript, which could be up to sixty pages long. This process was particularly important with Fu'ad, who had declined to be tape-recorded and therefore relied upon these summaries to verify that I had noted his stories correctly.

Summaries were written relatively informally and in the third person, as I would in the final thesis. Once completed, I mailed these summaries along with the full transcript to the participants asking them to think about how well they felt their anonymity had been preserved, any omissions I had made and if there was anything they wished to elaborate on in subsequent discussions. Since we would not meet again after the last interview, two copies of the transcript and summary were sent: one for them to keep and another for them to write on and return to me in a supplied postage-paid envelope. The low response rate to this (one participant took up this opportunity to reply) suggested that more sustained involvement in the research process was either impractical or undesirable for participants, highlighting the right of research participants *not* to participate.

[6] I discuss anonymity in more detail in Participants, below.

As a researcher I found this process both intellectually valuable and healthy. Research planning involves a degree of optimism about what can be achieved in a given amount of time and about transcribing and analysis being 'an ongoing process'. In this instance, however, each phase of the research could not proceed until the previous phase had been transcribed and the data circulated along with a summary. This cyclical research process allowed me to transcribe and analyse in short bursts, as well as maintain a sense of each family's story and the particularities of their experiences. Unfortunately it was not possible to maintain this pattern with individual interviews, which were completed in rapid succession towards the end of fieldwork. This removed the possibility of asking additional questions and to re-ask questions in the event of problems with the dictaphones. This also meant that transcription occurred in a long block. These issues were ameliorated by the intensity and continuity of repeated interviews, which sometimes took place at fortnightly intervals.

Principal analysis

In addition to this preliminary analysis, a second and more detailed 'ethnographic' analysis was conducted after the completion of fieldwork. Wilkinson (2004) uses the term 'ethnographic analysis' to refer to a selective, interpretive approach to qualitative data, in which utterances and behaviours are treated as both representative of participants' world views and as part of the interview situation. This differs from content analysis insofar as it does not involve a systematic search for particular utterances and behaviours, but instead employs a much closer reading of transcripts as both 'evidence' of participants thoughts and feelings and as products of the interview scenario itself. This interpretive analysis was carried out by hand using printed copies of transcripts and coloured pencils to highlight key themes and noting more specific topics within those themes in grey pencil in the margin. A series of log sheets was developed during coding where themes and sub-topics were recorded, as well as their location in particular interviews. This was later transferred to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, which enabled data to be sorted and filtered by various combinations of theme and topic. Interview extracts were then collated in a word document and put into a narrative and argumentative order that would provide the foundational structure of the thesis.

The effectiveness of this process relied on a reference system first developed during fieldwork to anonymise participants and expanded in order to precisely locate interview extracts at much later dates. In this system each participating group and individual was referred to by their geographical location in England (NW, SE or LON), the order they had been visited (a, b etc.), whether it was the first group interview (G1) or the second individual interview (IV2) and which page or pages in the transcript the interview extract appeared. Using this system and the spreadsheet I could quickly find all instances of, for example, the theme 'family' with the sub-topic of 'practices': pages 9-10, 17-18 and 27-28 of the first interview with the Al Rimawi family (NWbG1); page 50 of the second interview with Wadad and Tawfiq (SEbG2); many times throughout the first interview with Amina (LONaIV1); but only once in the first interview with Tayyib (LONcIV1).

Although this elaborate system was arguably unnecessary given the availability of analytical software for qualitative data and its potential usefulness for revisiting and re-interpreting data in different ways in future, this manual approach was my preferred method for several reasons. Firstly, I wanted the greatest possible freedom to work with the data in a way that was appropriate to its content and to my way of thinking, rather than be constrained by software capability. Secondly, I wished to obtain large-scale qualitative data management experience against which to adequately evaluate the appropriateness of any analytical software in future. Thirdly, I expected the long and repetitive process of marking and logging codes to cultivate a deeper familiarity with the data than could be achieved using a computer programme. Indeed, when it came to writing I knew each interview so well that, ironically, I barely needed the coding database I had created.

Security

Throughout the research process I was conscious of security in several ways. In addition to my personal safety, I was primarily concerned for the security of my participants' rights and identities, which were enshrined in the research consent form and remained at the forefront of my mind at every stage of fieldwork and writing. The consent form aimed to ensure that all participants understood the premise of the research, that they only volunteered for the aspects with which they were comfortable

and that they had done so under no pressure from anybody else. It also requested that they respect the confidentiality of the group discussion and advised them of their right to withdraw at any point without explanation (see Longhurst 2003). Finally, the consent form granted me the use of participants' personal information but assured them that I would treat this as confidential. Going through this paperwork at the beginning of the first interview could be uncomfortable, as it suggested a greater seriousness to the research than participants had anticipated or was necessarily the case. I stored these consent forms in locations separate from participant contact details and the interview tapes. Participant contact details were also kept in such an array of places that it was sometimes hard to find them.

My second major concern for was for the interview data itself. I chose to record interviews on microcassette rather than digitally because I had greater confidence in my ability to secure a physical tape than a digital file. Interview tapes were kept in a locked box away from other identifying material. I anonymised transcripts as I typed, simply giving each person an initial according to their position in the family. I also edited out information about where in Palestine the family were from and have given them different geographies in order to secure their anonymity. The main implication here is that, for readers knowledgeable about Palestine, each family's story will not make sense in relation to this pseudo-geography.[7] I cannot know to what extent these security measures were necessary or overzealous but I considered it ethically important to err on the side of caution.

What I have tried to demonstrate in recounting my rationale for and experience of various aspects of the research process is a range of struggles, imperfections and achievements involved in qualitative research. For instance, using personal recommendations to recruit participants was a slow and low-yielding recruitment strategy that contributed to trusting research relationships but did not eliminate the need for further relationship-building during the interview itself, as I shall explain below. Also, cycles of reflection and feedback, where they could be maintained, enriched the research process and made transcription manageable, but they also required additional communication between myself and participants that, if interrupted,

[7] I discuss this further in Participants, below.

had the potential to stall or even terminate a research relationship. Building on this discussion, I now turn to the specificities of conducting interviews with families in their own houses, concentrating on the politics of group construction and interview location, as well as wider issues of order, power and positionality encountered in fieldwork.

Working with families 'at home'

Researching with families as groups is important for the exploration of experiences of migration and diasporic life, because family relationships figure strongly in decisions to move and in the facilitation of movement, as well as managing life over distances. This makes family both a tool and the material of diasporic identities (Chamberlain 1995, 256; see also Ghabra 1987; Smith 2004; Waters 2002). Moreover, interviewing across generations within the same family also reveals more about the specific roles and importance of different members of a family in processes of migration and the (re)production of home, family and identity in diasporic contexts (Chamberlain 2003). At the same time, however, working with families creates issues, particularly around group composition. Many authors stress the importance of carefully selecting participants for group research in order to obtain a balance of perspectives and to construct a atmosphere of trust and support in which people feel able to speak freely and confidently (Longhurst 2003; Pratt 2002). This ideal is difficult to uphold in any research, particularly with small, politically sensitive populations such as Palestinians in Britain, and it is especially difficult to achieve with families, which are pre-existing groups to an extent. Indeed, I question whether such group management is desirable at all when working with families, since these relational dynamics are themselves part of the research and it would be counter-productive to attempt to flatten them. For example, parents and children, spouses and siblings in this research appeared relatively uninhibited in expressing their personal opinions about home, family and identity, even when those opinions elicited stern criticism. As such, it was possible to glimpse some of the personal and inter-personal struggles in which participants engage in order to claim their own position and modes of social, cultural, national and familial identification. Equally, it was possible to observe the ways in which family consensus is slowly constructed, as participants felt freer to elaborate on (or dismantle) another person's

opinion than is normally the case with unrelated group interviewees or those not part of a close friendship circle.

This is not to suggest that I had no influence on the composition of research groups. I did not request participation of any particular members of the family, but neither did I stipulate who counted as 'family', instead leaving it open for participants to invite whomever they chose. However, none of the participants invited close friends or honorary family to the interviews, which may have been because such people no longer lived close by, because they did not fulfil the 'Palestinian' criteria for involvement or because participants interpreted my call for families in terms of blood or marital relatives. I also asked that a minimum of two people from different generations of the family participate in order to provide a range of age perspectives. This was successful in three of the four group interviews, which variously had two, three and six participants from different generations. In the fourth instance, where I spoke only to a married couple, their children were busy with exam revision or away at university. The children also seemed uninterested in participating, which cast doubt on the voluntariness of their recruitment, so I did not pursue their involvement.

All group and most individual interviews took place in the family's house in order to prompt discussion about domestic space and everyday practice (Tolia-Kelly 2004b). Where members lived in different places this usually involved congregating at the parents' house, which often had enduring emotional significance for many participants as the key site of memory and it therefore remained a crucial environment to provoke reflection on notions and everyday practices of home, family and identity. From an ethical perspective, it is often advised to conduct research in quiet, safe, convenient and neutral or informal environments (Hoggart et al 2002). A single location rarely fulfils all of these requirements, least of all domestic space. Although interviewing 'at home' was convenient for participants in this research as our discussion could be fitted around their daily plans, this could also be detrimental as those daily plans sometimes carried on during the interview. Discussions were disrupted and recordings obscured by a range of noises inside and outside the house: telephones ringing, kettles boiling, children playing, low-flying aircraft passing, as well as participants themselves holding several conversations at once. Moreover, house cannot be assumed to be a safe or

neutral space for everyone. This refers partly to possibilities of domestic violence but also to more mundane organisations of power and labour within the house, in which children may be expected to uphold certain perspectives under their parents' roof and in which women's participation may be limited because they are busy preparing a meal for everyone to take after the interview (see Sibley 1995; Valentine 1999).

These issues around the place and composition of group interviews reveal some of the specific dynamics involved in researching with families in their own houses. There were, however, further issues around managing the research process, power relationships and positionality. As someone of roughly the same age as many participants' children, I fitted into the existing family power structure somewhere between parents and children, at once an empowered, professional outsider and an honorary daughter or sibling. Below I recount my experiences of working with three particular groups, in order to explore these in more detail.

Flexibility, responsibility and control

During the single interview I conducted with the Haniyyah family, a general issue of group research arose, namely the need to be flexible about interview attendance. Ilyas worked in the United Arab Emirates at the time we met and the interview had been arranged to take place during one of his trips to Britain, but I did not expect him to be present at future interviews. Nor did I expect Alifa, her husband and children to be present in future, given that they live several hours' drive from her parents. However, those not physically present at the interview can still be present *within* the interview, as demonstrated by the amount of time spent talking about their grandfather, and there is something to be learned from the way people speak about absent family members. Likewise, the practise and experience of diasporic family life was evident in the rarity of Ilyas's presence in the house and the atmosphere of happiness and love that prevailed. Although in one sense these positive emotions obscure more difficult aspects of family, this should not distract from the obvious pleasure everyone took from being together. Also the difficulties of distance were reflected upon and in a way heightened in the joy of reunion.

Another general aspect of group research that arose with the Haniyyahs was the tendency of participants to take collective responsibility for the interview process and

their confidence in contradicting one another or interjecting if someone wandered off topic. At one point, Nawal began telling a story about her family but was not able to finish as we became side-tracked by another conversation. Ilyas noticed this and a few minutes later, when there was a slight pause in the conversation, Ilyas interjected with 'can I just say something about Nawal's family…' and proceeded to complete the story. Later on Ibrahim made a comment about feeling less homesick in Britain once he got married, which Ilyas only partly heard as he was out of the room preparing a tray of snacks for me. So when Ibrahim mentioned his feelings of homesickness again Ilyas asked him to repeat what he had said earlier.

Both of these issues of attendance and conduct connects with a larger point about control during group interviews with families in their own homes, namely that one may have to relinquish desires to have everyone seated sedately around a table and focused entirely on the interview process. Although I was able to pursue this format in situations when there were fewer participants and no small children, things were so relaxed among the Haniyyahs that I became anxious that there would be nothing audible to transcribe: the six adults were seated on sofas, chairs and on the floor around the living room, with the two dictaphones and table microphone placed roughly in the centre; Alifa's two-year-old son wandered in and out, often taking an interest in the dictaphones, while Alifa's new baby also made periodic appearances; people left and re-entered the room at various points to make tea, prepare food, take telephone calls from family abroad, go to the bathroom or supervise the toddler in the garden; sometimes two or three conversations would be happening at once, some in English, some in Arabic, which was challenging (in places, impossible) to transcribe, particularly if the kettle was on next door. I moved around as well: when it was time for afternoon prayers, Ilyas and Ibrahim went to one end of the room, while the women and I continued our conversation in low voices at the opposite end, moving closer in order to hear one another. As a female researcher I also had privileged access to more private aspects of domestic family life, such as when Alifa began breast-feeding her youngest son while answering a question.

Although this encounter with the Haniyyahs was an exceptional experience among my group interviews, it does illustrate the potential challenges and pleasures of

conducting research with families in their own houses, as well as connecting with more general issues surrounding group research. This continuation of domestic life throughout the interview provided insights into that life in addition to what participants said about it. In this situation, however, I was mostly set outside everything that was happening: I was involved in the scene as a guest to be served food and tea, and as a witness to this theatre of family and domestic life. In another situation with the Al Rimawis, however, I was drawn into the family dynamics in ways that were somewhat uncomfortable.

Daughters, interventions and power

Meetings with the Al Rimawis conformed much more to the idealised set up of group interviews: Faruq, Noura, Zaki and I sat around a large table in their quiet dining room. However, it quickly became clear that the internal family dynamics were not quite so calm, as there were several tense differences of opinion between Faruq and Noura, in which I did and did not intervene in various ways. The first moment occurred in the first group interview when I asked about how family members kept in touch across the world and if there were any differences between men and women:

> Faruq: there is a difference between gender…beyond doubt [*laughs*] you know that.
>
> Joanna: oh yeah? Can you elaborate on that? [*laughs*]
>
> Faruq: ok, with all my respect [*inaudible*] you know ladies they like chatting more.
>
> Noura: I think that's the fun of "hi, how are you?" you know a quick, sweet conversation. Um we like to get more details of you know so and so. You know, "oh everyone's ok", you want to hear everyone's name, and you know so it's something along those lines. But then my dad's brother yesterday he called and I think he's totally opposite to my dad in every sense [*inaudible*] talking, so we were sat there having a conversation, joking and this and that. So I think it's the whole stereotype of the whole men and women, women talk more and men talk less. Um…I think dad's fallen into the stereotype of women talking more.
>
> Joanna: yeah? [*To Faruq*] But you're speaking from experience though right?
>
> Faruq: of course.

My choice to interject on Faruq's behalf by saying that he was 'speaking from experience' seemed odd, even at the time. It felt that I was leaping to his defence in some way, albeit over a trivial issue with which I actually disagreed. Whilst it is expected that interviewers will intervene in order to manage difficult situations

(Wilkinson 2004) and despite the fact that this kind of trivial interjection is inappropriate, it is interesting to interpret this occurrence in several ways. Firstly, it is possible that I was drawn into a daughterly desire for Faruq's approval. He had a powerful presence in the interview: whenever he spoke it was always very softly and deliberately, in proper sentences, while everyone sat in respectful silence. I am also only a couple of years older than Noura, his eldest daughter. From another perspective, Noura was quite talkative and had a tendency to interrupt other people's points or put words in their mouths. My interjection could therefore be interpreted as an attempt to support a 'subordinated' group-member as I would in any other group-interview situation.

Later on in the interview Faruq and Noura had a more serious altercation over their different ideas about family in which the respect and deference for elders that Faruq described instilling in his children was visibly at work. The exchange was not aggressive but a tense atmosphere developed in which Faruq quietly but firmly reprimanded Noura for her opinion. Although Noura spent the remainder of the interview carefully clarifying (but not modifying) her views to regain her father's favour, she would not talk over him even when he interrupted her. This time I did not intervene. Was this out of a daughterly desire not to 'side' against the father? Or did I recognise that this struggle between Noura and Faruq over the meaning of family was theoretically important and should play out? The tension in the room suggested that these were much more serious family politics in action than the light-hearted gender-stereotyping we had engaged in earlier, which made intervening a more delicate issue.

These family power dynamics with which I became entangled are an extension of more conventional political dynamics between researchers and participants that also arose during my research (Dowling 2000). These were partly bound up with political opinion and the ethics of researchers contributing to interview discussions rather than simply harvesting others' perspectives. However, these dynamics were also bound up with being in participants' houses and their right to invert the roles of interviewer and interviewee. The instance in question occurred on my first interview with Wadad and Tawfiq, during which Tawfiq repeatedly steered the conversation in order to make political points or to ascertain my political orientations. I have experienced such

suspicion my motive and political beliefs in previous research, but Tawfiq was unusually persistent.

Politics and positionings

I had been put in touch with Wadad and Tawfiq by a friend who 'vouched' for my sympathetic politics, as noted above. Tawfiq would therefore already have been aware of my political stance in relation to Palestine-Israel but he remained keen to ensure that I understood the Palestinians' predicament in *his* way. I had anticipated this from early on in our relationship: when I first spoke to Wadad to discuss their potential involvement she said that her husband was concerned about the kinds of questions I would be asking and so I sent a more detailed information sheet than I normally would in order to assuage any concerns. Their eventual participation shows that these efforts were successful. When we met, however, it was clear that Tawfiq believed further probing was required and he took every opportunity to point out the political relevance of his answers. As the interview progressed I hoped that his concerns would subside, particularly after I shared my own experience of being questioned by Israeli security at Ben Gurion airport. Indeed, we did not discuss anything overtly political for much of the interview, until the end:

> Joanna: for now that's everything that I wanted to ask about. Is there anything that you can think of, you know, is there anything that you would like to say about family, finally, that you think is important that I've missed?
>
> Wadad: I think we've covered everything, quite extensively
>
> Tawfiq: I just wanted to say that, do you think it's fair that someone coming from Russia have a home in our home and then we have to come to live abroad and we cannot come to live in our home?
>
> Joanna: no that is not fair. [*pause*] Not at all.

What struck me was that after two hours of discussion Tawfiq remained unsatisfied that I was on his 'side', as crude and polarising as that sounds, and that he needed to directly ask me for a declaration of solidarity, which I was happy to provide. However, as our conversation carried on in this openly political vein and Tawfiq showed no inclination of contributing anything further on the topic of family, I became bolder in my responses, even suggesting that he over-simplifies the Middle East situation. Far from angering him, it seemed to be what he had sought all along; that he

took my adherence to his political views during the interview as polite obedience rather than real conviction but now we were debating properly. Moreover, as a guest in his house I felt he was entitled to question me on a topic of importance to him.

In one sense, Tawfiq was simply exercising the interactional and constructive aspects of interviewing, albeit more fully than I had expected (Holstein and Gubrium 2004). Although I encouraged this kind of active process in all interviews, it was fortunate in this case that Tawfiq was interested in debate. Others, however, may have been offended by my political views, particularly my support for Israeli peace groups like Zochrot and my work on Jewish National Fund (JNF) forestry (Long 2009). Ilfat, for example, seemed irritated when we discussed it prior to our second group interview, complaining that Zochrot's signposting of demolished Palestinian villages in JNF forests was 'nothing'. Although this interlude did not make our discussion awkward, I took more care about expressing my own political sensibilities in subsequent situations.

In this discussion of working with families 'at home', I have emphasised the power of this research method as well as its challenges. Many of these issues are not unique to family research: issues of composition, location, control, positionality and power are negotiated in many areas of social research and they can enrich rather than inhibit the research process if critical reflexivity towards them is maintained. Once fieldwork is complete, however, these group dynamics continue to influence the research insofar as they demand long excerpts in order to convey the full train of a discussion, even while those excerpts are carefully edited to highlight key points. Although others may interview people together but cite them individually (see Chamberlain 1995), I believe it is important to quote interviews at length in order to convey contextual conversational meaning, bring the dynamics among participants to life, and communicate the laughter and energy that characterised my fieldwork. In this final section I discuss this commitment to representation further, specifically in relation to anonymity and the way I have chosen to introduce participants.

Participants

All participants were anonymised during transcription and given full pseudonyms from a list of authors featured in *Modern Arabic Fiction: An Anthology* (Jayyusi 2005). Each

family has at least two surnames, as is the Palestinian custom: a patrilineal one that is also taken by the children and a matrilineal one that is kept by the mother regardless of marriage. In some cases families have a third surname indicating belonging to a larger family or clan group but these are only used specifically when discussing large family belonging (Doumani 1995). For simplicity, when referring to a group I use the father's name as short-hand because most of the participants take this name.

In addition to pseudonyms, participants' migration histories have also been partially altered to preserve anonymity. As I will show in chapter six, there is a close relationship between family and place in Palestinian society and if participants' towns of origin were not altered it would be possible for knowledgeable readers to deduce their identity from their memories and experiences of Palestine. I was assisted in constructing these new geographies by *The Return Journey* (Abu Sitta 2007), an historical atlas of Palestine-Israel. This means that participants' recollections will not make geographical sense, although I have tried to give them a certain degree of localised coherence. In order to maintain the sense of discussions about life in Britain without compromising anonymity, participants were also given new British locations within the general region where they actually live. These pseudo-geographies do not, however, apply to participants' wider diasporic journeys, which remain true to their experiences but with any potentially identifying details edited out. This is partly because these geographies are less revealing than Palestinian origins or British place of residence, but mainly because the specificities of migration are influential in feelings about diasporic life.

Full introductions for each individual and group are woven into the course of the thesis. I have done this in an attempt to represent the complexity of participants' lives and experiences more fully than is possible in the space below. Moreover, certain participants' stories had particular relevance to the themes of certain chapters, therefore it seemed appropriate and more engaging to introduce them from these 'angles'. For example, Amina and Ilfat had important experiences of and feelings about their houses therefore they are further introduced at the beginning of chapter four, along with the Al Rimawis who had an important debate about house, home and homeland. The Haniyyahs and Jameel Nuweihad had particularly interesting views and experiences of

scattered family, which opened up many of the issues explored in chapter five. Finally, Fu'ad, Tayyib, Wadad and Tawfiq had crucial thoughts on social groups and diasporic belonging that were best placed at the beginning of chapter six. All participants are discussed throughout the thesis and their stories partially told in the process, but it is ethically and intellectually important that they receive these dedicated introductions.

Introducing participants throughout the thesis in this way enables each person's and each family's experiences to be articulated on their own terms and in a way that emphasises their specific contribution to the argument under discussion. In the process, the perspectives being explored *and* the arguments being advanced are grounded within particular histories, personalities, ideals and practices. However, it remains useful to provide short summaries of each participating group and individual here. These are arranged in the order in which they are introduced throughout the thesis.

Amina Idilbi

Amina lives in London and is from a large, prominent and accomplished family in the Jerusalem area. They were not displaced during the wars of 1948 and 1967 and most of her family continue to live in Jerusalem itself, although they have historically been spread between Jerusalem and the nearby villages of Shu'fat and Beit Hanina. Amina came to Britain in the 1970s to attend boarding school because the situation in Jerusalem at the time was extremely volatile. After completing her A-levels, Amina stayed in Britain to complete several undergraduate degrees, only returning to Jerusalem in the mid-1980s to work for a few years and take a break from studying. She returned to do a Masters and PhD in London, becoming involved in activism for Palestine, but she lost touch with these when she and her husband, Burhan, started a family. Now separated from Burhan, Amina has plans to return to her doctorate and seek a job in higher education.

Ilfat and Maryam

Ilfat and her daughter Maryam live in the northwest of England. Ilfat's family are from the village of Beit Awwa, not far from Al Khalil (Hebron). Having fled Beit Awwa in 1948, Ilfat had a peripatetic upbringing between Jordan and Libya before moving to

Britain with her new husband, Isma'il, in order for him to do a postgraduate course. At first they lived with their baby son, Yusuf, in university accommodation in London before moving into staff accommodation at the hospital where Isma'il was working in the northwest of England. They later bought this house and remained there for fifteen years along with another son, Akram, and daughter, Maryam, until they found their current house and moved in just as the second *intifada* began in 2001. Isma'il died in 2006 but the family have continued living in the north-west, keeping in touch with family around the world by phone and email, although Ilfat does not visit as much as she used to because she dislikes flying. Maryam is in her late-twenties and studied languages at university. Apart from her parents' houses, she has lived in several rooms and flats abroad as part of her degree and she moved in with her new husband, who is also Palestinian, during fieldwork.

Faruq, Noura and Zaki Al Rimawi

Faruq Al Rimawi and his children, Noura and Zaki, live in the northwest of England. Faruq comes from Ramallah, although his family are originally from the nearby village of Beituniya. They fled to Kuwait in 1948, where Faruq grew up and trained as a doctor. In 1989 he came to Britain with his wife, Lutfiyya, and two young daughters, Noura and Sahar, to complete postgraduate studies. When Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990, the family was forced to stay, losing all the possessions they had left in storage in anticipation of their eventual return. Over the next seven years the family expanded with the arrival of two sons, Zaki and Sa'id, and they moved around England for Faruq's job, living in six different houses across the Midlands and northwest before settling in their current house where they've lived for twelve years. Faruq's family are spread across the Middle East, Europe and the United States, and they keep in touch with regular telephone calls and emails but it is difficult to meet up all together. This is not the case with Lutfiyya's family, who have mainly settled in Jordan and whom Noura, Zaki and their siblings visit when they can. Noura is in her mid-twenties and, having completed her degree at the local university, she continues to work in the area and lives with her parents. Noura is active in the Palestine solidarity movement and her teenage brother, Zaki, would like to be similarly politically involved. However, his

family say that he is too young and that his current priority is to get a good education and build a respected position within society so that his future activism may be more effective.

Jameel Nuweihad

Jameel came to Britain in the 1970s after being offered a job as an architect in London. He found the city an excellent base from which to explore the rich architectural heritage of continental Europe. In London he also met and married his wife, Helene, who is originally from Germany, and they went on to have a daughter, Layla, who has had an eclectic, German-Arabic-British upbringing. Jameel's family are from Al Ramle, just to the south of what is now Ben-Gurion Airport. However, due to heavy fighting in the area around the time of his birth in the early 1940s, Jameel was born in his mother's home town of Bethlehem, where he spent the first few weeks of his life in the care of nuns. The family fled to Beirut in 1948 by drawing on his father's business connections. Jameel left Beirut in the 1960s to study architecture in the United States, where he stayed for nine years before moving to Britain and, apart from several months spent in the Algerian desert and a year working in Saudi Arabia, Jameel has lived in London ever since. His relatives mostly live in the United States.

The Haniyyahs

Nawal Jabra and her husband, Ilyas Haniyyah, are both from families based on the Mediterranean coast, just north of Gaza. Nawal's family are from the village of Al Jora, from which they were forced to flee in 1948 to Kuwait, where Nawal was later born. During the Gulf War, her family fled once again to Jordan and her four siblings are now spread between Kuwait and Jordan, where her mother lives, and she visits them quite regularly. Ilyas's family are from the same area of Palestine and in 1948 they fled to their relatives in Gaza. In the mid-fifties, the family moved to Egypt in order for his father to complete a university diploma and later to Kuwait with his job as a teacher. Ilyas first came to Britain in the 1970s to do his A-levels and an undergraduate degree, before returning to Kuwait to work. He and Nawal were married in 1984 and they moved to Britain with their baby daughter, Alifa, so that Ilyas could undertake a

Masters and a PhD and their two other daughters, Liana and Mai, were both born in England. Ilyas's parents remained in Kuwait during the Gulf War but moved to Britain once it was over, choosing a town in the southwest of England to be close to Ilyas and his family, although Ilyas and Nawal have since moved to the southeast. In the last few years, Nawal and Ilyas have gained two grandsons, Mustafa and Sabri, who are the children of Alifa and her husband Ibrahim 'Ali Taha, who is from the village of Tira, now in Israel.

Fu'ad Habayib

Fu'ad has been living in Britain for around fifty years, having come to attend university in his early twenties. Fu'ad spent his youth in Nazareth and has clear memories of his family's displacement to a different part of the town during the 1948 war, seeking shelter in the homes of those who had fled to Lebanon. Fu'ad comes from a Christian family and met his English wife, Emily, at a church group. A few years after they married, Fu'ad's job compelled them to move out of London to the north of England, where they lived for twenty years and raised their two children, before Fu'ad began training to become a minister, which involved moving around a lot. In 2003, he retired to the West Midlands in order to be close to Emily's sister, although he continues to preach occasionally and provides pastoral care for a local Methodist church. Over the course of his life, Fu'ad has been somewhat distant from other Palestinians. Now that he has retired, Fu'ad has had more time to explore his Palestinian heritage and connect with his local Palestinian group.

Tayyib Rifa'iyya

Tayyib is a journalist who has been living and working in London for almost twenty years. Tayyib's family are originally from Yaffa but during the 1948 war they fled first to Jerusalem and then to the village of Abu Dis just outside the city only a few weeks later. In the early 1950s, Tayyib's father took an engineering job in Kuwait, with his wife and ten children joining him a few years later. Tayyib completed his high school education in Kuwait before leaving to pursue a degree in journalism in Cairo, after which he returned to Kuwait to work. There he was introduced to his future wife,

Isabel, a young English woman in Kuwait as part of her Arabic and Islamic Studies course. After they married, they continued to live in Kuwait until the Iraqi invasion in 1990, when they along with their two sons, Khalid and Marun, were evacuated by the British government. In England they moved into the flat they already owned near Isabel's parents, later moving into a larger house in London where they have stayed ever since. Tayyib and Isabel also built a house in Jordan, near to where Tayyib's parents settled after their expulsion from Kuwait. This is where they stay during their annual trips to visit Tayyib's family.

Wadad Nasrallah and Tawfiq Al Mazini

Wadad and Tawfiq have two teenage sons, Saleem and Ghazi, and they live in the south-east of England where they run a local Arabic school. Wadad comes from a small but well-known family in Nablus but spent parts of her childhood living in Afghanistan and Libya, where her father worked, before coming to Britain to attend boarding school. After completing her education she returned to Nablus for six years, where she met and married Tawfiq and she returned to Britain with him. At the time, Tawfiq was working for a company in London and had already been in Britain for several years. The Al Mazinis, an established family from Tulkarm, had fled in 1948 to their relatives in Gaza and remained there for several years before moving again to Egypt, where Tawfiq grew up and attended university. Tawfiq is one of five children, all of whom are now scattered across the Middle East, with some in Kuwait, some still living in Egypt and others in Gaza and the West Bank. Wadad's immediate family are less scattered, as two of her siblings continue to live in Nablus and another in Saudi Arabia, while many other relatives live in Jordan and she visits them every year, often with her sons.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have outlined the theoretical rationale and practical processes of working with Palestinian voices. Some of the issues discussed here have not been overcome, specifically the circularity of investigating the construction of 'being Palestinian' by inviting the participation of those already identifying as Palestinian, which excluded non-Palestinian family members who may have had valuable cross-

cultural perspectives. However, other issues of decolonising methodologies and positionality have been worked into the research process, analysis and writing. I resist homogenising constructions of Palestinians by presenting a greater diversity of voices than dominant identity discourses usually allow and, in so doing, reveal wider possibilities for imagining, practising and debating Palestinian identity. Moreover, employing a reflexive awareness of power and positionality within the research process, I aim to contribute to debates around working with families as groups in their own houses. Indeed, having conducted my research *fil beit* (in the house/at home), I continue in this context in the next chapter as I begin my exploration of home, family and identity through the spaces and practices of *al beit*. In the process, I demonstrate the value of an in-depth engagement with the stories and perspectives of families *and* individuals in enabling a detailed exploration of home, family and identity in diasporic contexts.

4 SPACES AND PRACTICES OF *AL BEIT*

This chapter explores participants' experiences of and ideas about the houses in which they have lived (and would like to live), and the practices that bring these spaces to life in particular ways. The chapter's purpose is to consider how physical domestic spaces shape family practices, and how these feature in the (re)production of different kinds of identities among Palestinians in Britain. My argument is that physical living spaces can be enrolled in family practices for the purpose of (re)producing identities, particularly educating children about their heritage. In the process, however, various aspects of Arab/Palestinian family life and British domestic spaces may have to change in order to accommodate one another. Relationships between domestic space and family practices are important because they reveal intimacies and complexities about identity (re)production, which are frequently overlooked by mainstream Palestinian political discourse and academic literatures discussed in the introduction.

It is for this reason that I have chosen to use the Arabic term *beit* rather than the English term 'house' to discuss the domestic practices and feelings of Palestinians living in Britain. As Taufiq Canaan (1933) explains, *beit* has literal, figurative and metaphoric meanings. In the literal sense, *beit* (pronounced 'bayt') means house, abode, dwelling or tent (see also Salmoné 1890). *Al beit* therefore means 'the house' and *fil beit* (an abbreviation of *fee al beit*) means 'in the house'. In a figurative sense, *beit* refers to the place of an abstract thing, such as a pillow case (*beit al makhadeh*) or the heart (*beit a-ruḥ*, house of the soul). Finally, in the metaphoric sense, *beit* refers to family, as does the term *daar.* Therefore a person may ask *min daar miin?*, meaning 'which family are you from?', and be replied *ana min beit Maqdisi*, meaning 'I am from the Maqdisi family'. Although house in Arabic is connected to concepts of home as it is in English, straightforward translation should not be taken as an indication of shared notions of house-as-home (Awde and Smith 2004; Benjamin 1968; Dar Al-Majoumi 2007; Elias 1913; Saad 1926; Spivak 1993). Indeed, it is my aim in this chapter to explore the relationships between house and home, as well as other articulations of feeling 'at

home'. Taking up Harker's (2009) call for more attention to the intimate spaces and relationships of Palestinian lives, I employ the terms *beit*, *al beit*, and *fil beit* in order to foreground the interrelationship of family and house in modes of dwelling within Palestinian culture, while also decentring (but not dismissing) conflations of 'house' and 'home'.

The aim of this chapter is to take the built form of the house, *al beit*, and explore how personal and familial experiences and practices bring different meanings to this space. One focus is on house-design, specifically the differences between British and Palestinian domestic architectures, and the role of these different spaces in practices of domestic hospitality in Palestinian culture. This discussion will connect with everyday social life, and practices of cultural and national identities. It will also examine the politics of control over domestic space, including the physical layout of interiors, décor and material objects, and how this influences feelings of attachment to and belonging within those spaces. Throughout, I engage with a range of literatures including the architecture of Arab and British houses, the dynamics of kitchens and material geographies of domestic space.

The chapter begins by exploring three participants' routes to Britain and how different houses have figured in these travels. Specifically, I discuss how the main reasons for travel have influenced participants' experiences of living in, leaving and arriving in different houses, particularly their current one. In doing so, I aim to understand participants' modes of dwelling in mobility, as articulated in their feelings about their current house in relation to both past and ideal houses and the extent to which these have been or could ever be considered as 'home'. Through this discussion I investigate the politics of houses as a mode of independence, identity and 'rooting', as part of a contested house-home-homeland trinity, and as a locus of memory, family and belonging. This opening section provides a platform for exploring the spaces and practices that make a house meaningful for participants through two broad and interconnected themes of identity and hospitality.

In the section 'spaces of identity' I explore domestic material cultures of home and identity in order to understand the role of objects in the (re)production and exhibition of personal and familial identities. Here the brimming living rooms of Ilfat and

Maryam's house and the carefully arranged spaces of Wadad and Tawfiq's help to elaborate the ways in which particular aspects of cultural, religious, personal and political identities may be articulated within domestic space. The section on 'the social lives of houses' goes on to address practices of hospitality *fil beit*. Here I discuss the intersection of domestic design and participant's wider social worlds. Specifically, I discuss the varying degrees of everyday domestic openness and the spatial demands of entertaining in the desired style. Drawing in particular on stories of Wadad and Tawfiq's struggle over their kitchen, and Ilfat's open-house policy, I explain how the physical design of participants' houses in Britain can enable and constrain social lives in various ways.

Between these two main sections are two shorter parts. The first takes up issues raised by participants' stories around the importance of language in articulating feelings of home and homeland, focusing in particular on how the sound and use of different languages can conjure feelings of home in different ways. The second part connects the discussions of material cultures and the social lives of houses by addressing the interrelationship between people and space. Drawing on Jameel's reflections as a domestic architect, it focuses on the (im)balance between external and internal environments, the wider social world and inner personalities, and how architecture and family life must accommodate one another, synchronising to each other's rhythms.

Dwellings

This opening section explores participants' range of mobilities in order to understand the influence of personal migration histories on participants' feelings about their current and previous houses. All participating families and individuals had come to and remained in the UK through a combination of marriage, education, work and/or expulsion. Following the pattern of leading-spouse migration, some (mainly female) participants moved to Britain after getting married either because their partners were pursuing further education (Ilfat), because their partners had a job in Britain (Wadad and Tawfiq), or because they were expelled from their previous country of residence and their partner had British citizenship (Tayyib). Other participants had come to the UK for educational or professional reasons, in keeping with much longer Palestinian

histories of studying abroad (Abu Lughod 2000; Anabtawi 1986), but other factors induced them to stay. Some participants met their partners in Britain and built a life together here (Amina, Fu'ad, Jameel), whereas those who had come from Kuwait to study became stranded when the Gulf War broke out (Al Rimawis and Haniyyahs).

The theme of expulsion comes most clearly to the fore in these last two instances, but it is something that pervades everyone's experiences in some way, as the families of almost every participant were forced out of Palestine during 1948 and the three families who subsequently made their way to Kuwait were expelled for a second time when the Gulf War broke out. Those whose families managed to remain in Palestine during *al Nakba* were not untouched by these processes of expulsion, as they either fell under Israeli occupation (Amina and Wadad) or were incorporated as Israeli citizens (Fu'ad and Ibrahim). In both of these situations, the Israeli state employs mechanisms to alienate people from Palestine by requiring people to carry West Bank and Jerusalem ID cards, undergo checkpoint interrogation and military incursions, and endure social, political and professional discrimination. Despite the pervasiveness of expulsion in participants' lives, I have chosen not to begin my discussion of Palestinian mobilities with this topic because to do so risks conflating all Palestinian experiences with the creation of Israel, as per hegemonic political discourse. This is not to say that expulsion is unimportant to participants' experiences of moving, but to always begin a discussion of Palestinian experiences with *al Nakba* sets this up as the single, founding root of a unitary Palestinian identity, which my own and others' research shows to be much more complex and to have a much longer history.

I begin, therefore, with the theme of education, which I explore through the story of Amina's arrival in the UK as a teenager to attend boarding school. I then explore Ilfat's experience of living in fourteen houses in her lifetime, through a combination of her father's international search for work after the 1967 war and her husband's postgraduate studies. Finally, I tell how the Al Rimawis came to the UK while Faruq was studying but became stranded after Iraq invaded Kuwait. Although I discuss only three stories in detail, I touch on everyone's experiences in some way and draw out other participants' stories as the chapter progresses.

Uprooting early

Amina Idilbi came to Britain in the 1970s at the age of sixteen to attend boarding school because the situation in Jerusalem was so volatile that her parents feared not just for her education but for her life, particularly after a girl in the year above her at school was shot dead by the Israelis. According to Amina, the Idilbi family is 'known for education' and she is particularly proud of the women in her family whose long history of academic achievements disrupts orientalist discourses about the oppression of women in Palestinian society. In keeping with this history:

> There was no question that my mum would have ever allowed either of her daughters not to get at least a Master's degree. I don't think that was ever an option […] So, I think that the idea was if I stayed I would either get polit- involved politically, and I already was doing something, or that I'd be shot dead and in the best scenario there is no school. So I was sent here.

Amina was sent to Britain because her siblings were already at school here and her parents visited twice a year to see them and attend to business interests at the same time. Amina's parents wanted all their children to be educated in English and Britain was easier to travel to than the United States; Amina's father had been educated in the United States but the three months it had taken him to cross the Atlantic deterred him from choosing the same for his children. Ultimately, however, the decision about whether Amina would attend boarding school at all was made by Amina and her father during protracted discussions in which neither of them really knew what was the best course of action: 'he said "what are we going to do? Do you want to go or not?" and I said "I really don't know" and he said "well, I really don't know" and we kept going like this'. In the course of these discussions, however, they tentatively embarked on the relevant visa and school application processes, the success of which eventually helped to make up their minds. In this way, family was crucial to Amina's first move to Britain, not only in terms of the Idilbis historic reputation for education and their international mobility, but also her close relationship with her father. However, this sudden independence from her family and the fraught experience with cultural difference that followed influenced her self-identity in ways that still resonate thirty years on.

Amina struggled at the first school she attended due to sustained bullying and racism from other pupils, as well as the loneliness of being one of the few who took her exams seriously:

> Nobody wanted to work and come end of the year, it's summer, it's shiny and they're sunbathing and they have their A-levels the next day. That's when I decided I really can't stay with these people, they're too comfortable. I come from a place, you know, there is urgency, there's- you have exams, you don't breathe, you have- and I couldn't, I couldn't tolerate being with these people […] they had no need to study and sunbathing, you know, to take those three, few hours of sun was a lot more important than passing their exams because passing their exams doesn't really mean anything. Whereas for me it was life or death, you know, having been here because there was a death back there.

The relaxed attitudes of these young, privileged, English women towards their education were incommensurate with those of this similarly privileged, young Palestinian woman, to the point that Amina felt unable to remain at the school. She flourished at her subsequent school, both academically and personally. This change may be partly attributed to what happened during her journey to this new school: when she arrived at Heathrow airport she was supposed to be met by some family friends but they did not appear. The decision she made in that moment is one to which she still returns:

> I have a choice: either I'm going to collapse in the middle of Heathrow and I don't know who's going to look after me, or I press on. Do I have a third choice? No. So I press on. […] I thought "my life is me and [my suitcase]. There is no mama, there is no baba, there is no-one in the world. It's me and that bag. Look around you, there is nothing else. I have to make it".

At school Amina says she began to affect 'this stupid British accent' and would pretend to her schoolmates that she really was British and had acquired her olive skin from a Spanish grandmother. She refers to this now as a defence mechanism, a way of protecting herself from 'getting too close' and being hurt as she had been before. The British reserve she adopted in the process had an impact on her relationship with her older sister, Samira, who was also studying in the UK at that time. Amina describes her sister as someone who 'was still the Palestinian who sort of goes "aaargh!", you know, when you meet' and so Samira found it strange and almost cold when Amina did not greet her in the same loudly ebullient way. For Amina, this example illustrates her

struggle between the enduring British parts of her personality and herself as a Palestinian, which have taken years to reconcile. In another sense, however, Amina's youthful independence constituted an early break from her family, to whom she had always been so physically and emotionally close, a break which has influenced her attitudes towards 'house'.

After completing her A-levels, Amina stayed on in Britain to complete several undergraduate degrees. During this time she lived in various different places, including with an English family for four years and then two rented flats with her brothers. Amina felt particularly attached to these latter places because she herself was renting them, albeit with her parents' financial backing, and she recalls the two objects in each of those flats which symbolised her independence: a little pink cushion and a tomato plant: 'I don't remember the address but I remember the tomatoes in the kitchen'. Although her reasons for becoming attached to these flats are vague, Amina suggests that it might be that, to all intents and purposes, they were hers: 'every house since, I think, especially the ones that are mine and not my parents', I attach to very much […] It's very interesting'. In other words, the experience of living away from her family helped Amina to cultivate a sense of dwelling places as sites for developing and preserving her individual existence and sense of self.

The house in which she currently lives in London is perhaps the most special, although she is wary of over-sentimentalising. She moved there nine years ago with her husband, Burhan, and three-year-old son, Zayd, after the muddle of a young family became too much for their small flat in central London. 'The minute we parked outside, I knew it was my house', she says:

> There are a lot of little anecdotes attached to this house that made us both attached to it more, *bas* [but] I think it's precisely because of who we are that we- we- we- these anecdotes meant something. I'm sure every house has anecdotes but people who don't have to keep fulfilling an emotional need don't even remember these things.

The emotional need to which Amina is referring is the need to 'root', as she says, having been 'uprooted' so young: 'you make a big deal out of [anecdotes] because you need to hold onto something'. The things Amina and Burhan made a big deal out of in relation to this house were the fact that the old Polish couple who owned it saw them as

younger versions of themselves and agreed to sell them the house at a fixed price, even though its value increased considerably during the time it took to complete the sale. Also, the man had recently undergone a heart operation similar to the ones Amina's father had been through and could also sympathise with Burhan's congenital heart problems. It also transpired in the course of their conversation that the man had served in Palestine during the 1920s in the very town where Amina's father had been born. These uncanny connections and the friendly relationship they had with this couple from the outset constituted, in Amina and Burhan's eyes, important signs that this was the place for them:

> I'm sure if I were English and I had no issue with identity, citizenship, belonging, da da da da da, proving where you are, constantly proving that there is a country called Palestine, constantly disproving Golda Meir that we are- we don't exist. I don't think that it would have- *yănni* [I mean], I- I think everybody hears these things *bas* [but] those in need latch onto them and say [*gasps*] "this happened!"

Amina's point demonstrates how the constant demands on Palestinians to assert their existence to the world, in the face of Zionist discourses which would erase them, destabilises her sense of having a place in the world which gets played out in relation to house (see Bishara 2003). However, the 'roots' Amina has set down for herself through this house cannot provide the same security as her sense of family rootedness, which is recorded in the history books as stretching back over three hundred years.[8] The perpetual insecurity Amina feels is manifested in the contents of her handbag, which contains such an array of items that, as she says, she could live for several weeks on its contents. 'I have a handbag of a person who grew up under curfew, under occupation and under curfew'. 'It's a mentality', she says, which demands she carry enough money to last her in case she is kept away for a night, a week, a month, possibly forever: credit cards and savings books for when the cash runs out; utility bills as proof of identity in case she must set up a new life elsewhere; memory sticks so she can continue working throughout and maintain her professional contacts, whose numbers are written in her old diaries. As such, Amina's mode of being in the world revolves not around a fixed dwelling place (such as the house through which she and her husband desperately

[8] Amina's family are referred to in Peretz (1986) and Doumani (1995) as having lived in Palestine for centuries.

sought to 'root') but around her handbag and the power of its contents to enable her to dwell anywhere. She carries all of this in spite the fact that her family have never been displaced – not during the 1930s uprising, nor the 1948 creation of Israel or the 1967 war – and the fact that she has spent most of her life in Britain:

> Amina: I am English for god's sake, *yănni* [I mean], and I'm egg on toast. What am I doing with- with this mentality? I've lived here- *yănni* I lived in [London] longer than I lived in Jerusalem, what am I doing with this? […] What am I keeping these things for? Because in case there is curfew, I have important things- I carry the important things with me
>
> Joanna: mm it's a mobile home
>
> Amina: it's a mobile home.

This habit, although partly learned in Palestine, is also connected to her continued lack of British citizenship, despite repeated applications, and with that a very immediate sense of political insecurity in the UK. Thus, in the language of Young's 'normative values of home' (1997), 'house' has been an important site of individuation, privacy and preservation for Amina, but a sense of safety remains elusive. Although physically (but not financially) independent from her parents from a young age, the residences that have meant the most to her are those in which she was able to cultivate an individual existence and identity, as in the case of the flats she shared with her brothers as an undergraduate, and those which fostered hopes for rootedness in the world and a stabilised identity, as her current house did upon her first encounter with it. Although these attachments are powerful, a combination of the emotional closeness with her family and their illustrious educational legacy, as well as Zionist discourses of erasure and practices of Israeli occupation, remains equally powerful in constraining her sense of self, freedom and security, which have been expressed through her varying degrees of trust in the different places she has lived.

Fourteen new beginnings

In terms of sheer number of different flats or houses lived in, Ilfat's story eclipses all other participants: she can count fourteen different residences spread across Palestine, Jordan, Libya and the UK, although she does not remember a lot about them. The first was her family's house in Beit Awwa near Al Khalil (Hebron), where they had only lived for a few months and to which they were still doing work when they were forced

to flee during the1967 war. Like so many others their plan had been to return once the situation calmed down but although they were later allowed to pick up some possessions from the house they were never able to return permanently. Fortunately, Ilfat's mother had an uncle working in Jordan and they were able to stay with him rather than go into a refugee camp. The situation was not ideal, however, as he already had a family of ten children when Ilfat's parents arrived with their five offspring. After a few months they were able to move to their own flat in Jordan but soon after, Ilfat's father found work in Libya, where they shared a house with another family for a year or two. Again the situation was crowded, as Ilfat was now one of six children and the other family had nine of their own, but their financial situation made it necessary. The family later moved to a house of their own for a while, which had no running water or electricity, before finding a more modern apartment near to the sea. The family eventually left Libya in the late-1970s in order for Ilfat to begin a degree in pure mathematics back in Jordan, where she met and married her husband, Isma'il. Together they then moved to a very noisy flat elsewhere in the same city, where she recalls their neighbour and landlady sharing food with them and generally looking after them as if they were her own children. During this earlier part of Ilfat's life, then, 'house' meant 'shelter' more than anything else. Having been supported by family members in Jordan immediately after the 1967 war, she and her parents and siblings then had to go where her father could find work and to live wherever they could afford, often without much private space. While her own university education brought them all back to Jordan, it was her new husband's which brought her to Britain.

Ilfat and Isma'il arrived in the UK in the mid-1980s with their two young children in order for him to undertake medical postgraduate studies. They only intended to stay for a couple of years and then return to Jordan, but this return never came about partly because of Isma'il's heart condition, which delayed his studies, and also because of errors with their citizenship application. Isma'il had been working in Britain for four years when they decided to apply for citizenship as a matter of convenience. Upon doing so, they were told that they were in the country illegally and must leave immediately. It took eighteen months to decipher that this was because Isma'il had been unwittingly working on a student visa rather than a working visa. Once they had obtained the

correct visa, Ilfat and Isma'il then had to begin the citizenship application process all over again because the Home Office did not recognise the five and a half years they had already spent in Britain. Ilfat laughed as she told me

> We had to start all over again! And when we did that and- for us to reach the time that allows to get the British passport, the children were in critical stage of their education and taking them out was difficult, so we decided to stay.

During this time the family lived in several different places, firstly with friends in Manchester but soon after moving into student accommodation for a few months. Ilfat has fond memories of this time, despite the fact that they were living in a single room with no heating or washing machine or toys for the children:

> I used to wash my- by hand and hang things to dry with no heating […] so uh, so em things would take weeks to dry [*laughs*] and they start smelling [*laughs*]! […] But now we laugh about it you know. I mean even those memories that are difficult. Like I remember even in [one place] Yusuf said once "oh", you know, "I hate this place. I hate this house." I said "why?" He said "Mama, there isn't even a single toy in it" [*laughs*] because we couldn't afford any toys. We couldn't afford at all at the time. You know, the salary, the scholarship was very minimum and half of it or more would go to the rent and the rest you could hardly manage food with it.

For Ilfat, the struggle to live within such financial and spatial constraints was bearable, even enjoyable, as long as they were all together as a family:

> I was happy even then because I was with Isma'il. You know, what happened was when he got the scholarship from Jordan he said "I could go" and because we knew he didn't have enough money he said, you know, "I'll just live a little bit of tough life until things are better, then you can come with the children". I said "No. Way. I come with you. Even if we live in the streets" [*laughs*]. So I came knowing that we will have nothing. I knew, you know, this is how it is but I was happy just like that. It was ok. Just being with him and the children, that was ok.

They later moved into what seemed like a palatial two-bedroom flat provided by a hospital where Isma'il was working and about a year afterwards they moved to the house where they would spend the next fifteen years. This was once again hospital-subsidised accommodation, which they were later able to buy outright and this small, semi-detached, three-bedroom house remains special to all of them as the place where the children grew up and the scene of many happy memories:

Ilfat: I think when you are [*inaudible*] family, wherever you go you try to make home of a house, yeah. So I sometimes, you know, I love [that] house still because we lived there most of our lives

Maryam: it's got a lot of nice memories

Ilfat: yeah, everything is just beautiful about it. It has a very nice feeling and we lived very happily there. You know, everything was just happy life.

This house did eventually become too small for them and they moved to their current house in 2001, which turned out to be quite an emotionally challenging experience for Ilfat. It took four years for them to find the house they wanted and to sell their previous one, during which time Ilfat became so fixated on moving that she says she lost sight of 'the real picture, the bigger picture' and when they finally did move 'it was huge big disappointment and guilt feeling and all that stuff'. Ilfat's guilt was because three days after they moved into their new house the second *intifada* broke out in Palestine:

So I couldn't enjoy, I really could not. It was very, very difficult because I felt guilty all the time. You know, just to have this huge move from a tiny little house to this big beautiful space. You know, it wasn't just- the space itself is just beautiful so this- this- this guilt just did not leave for a long, long time. Especially watching, you know, week after week, month after month, people dying, homes demolished and I was tormented. Really, really tormented. Just couldn't enjoy it.

Two things helped her through this, the first of which was a friend telling her: 'don't think of it as yours, think of giving it to God and using the house for good use'. Following this advice, Ilfat became involved in a local Palestine organisation, holding meetings in the house and creating a workroom downstairs dedicated to these Palestine activities: 'I felt, you know I'm using it for something positive. That helped me'. The second, and perhaps most crucial, thing that helped Ilfat reconcile her new house with the situation in Palestine was reading a book exploring 'attachment in life' and how becoming attached to objects distracts people from their deeper attachment to Allah:

If we lose the focus and we become just attached with the things around us, whether people, whether things, whether homes, whatever it is and forget about the real aims that is, you know, the real attachment that thing is leading to, God, we end up disa- becoming disappointed with the, whatever we fall in love with or become attached to. We end up disappointed no matter what. Until we realise that the real attachment is this, you know, like, relationship with God. Everything else is just road signs leading

> to God. If we stop there, it's not our destination, we end up becoming disappointed. So this is how I, you know, I like analysed it in my head.

Thinking about the house from this 'spiritual aspect' helped Ilfat to enjoy and eventually love it because she saw herself as its caretaker rather than its owner: 'God entrusted me with it, so what shall I do with it?' In a way, Ilfat's new house had to justify its place in her life, in keeping with the Qur'anic expression which states that a house must be accepted by its inhabitants and not just occupied as a convenient shelter (Noor 1986, 61). All their previous houses had been chosen more or less out of necessity and some had accumulated special significance through memories of happy family life as well as struggle. However, their decision to move into this last house was freer than ever before and the painstaking selection of the house over the course of four years gave it impossible expectations to meet. Developing a role for the house in Ilfat's political and spiritual life was therefore crucial to her relationship with it and to her comfort within it.

When three years become twenty

Faruq Al Rimawi, his wife, Lutfiyya, and their two young daughters, Noura and Sahar, arrived in England in 1989 in order for Faruq to undertake a three-year postgraduate course. Both Faruq and Lutfiyya's families had fled Palestine in 1948 and settled in Kuwait, where the pair met and where Faruq trained as a doctor. However, only a year after the family had temporarily relocated to the UK, Iraq invaded Kuwait and the family lost not only their house but all the possessions they had left in storage in what Noura calls a second, 'mini-*Nakba*':

> I think it's a lot of, like, what a lot of Palestinians said: "oh we'll be back in such an amount of time". Yeah, in two weeks but in our case it was, you know, "three years and we're back" but sort of three years passed and that wasn't the case.

Over the twenty years since, the family have lived in seven different houses, by Noura's recollection, in various parts of the UK. Many of these were flats attached to a hospital in which Faruq was working or they were privately rented, which meant that the family were often only in one place for a year or so at a time. In the process, the elder children became accustomed to moving regularly, although they did not

necessarily like it. Noura recalls causing trouble when they bought their current house twelve years ago because she had liked their previous house a lot, particularly the stained-glass effect in some of the windows. Although she was initially keen to move elsewhere, she is now no longer so sure but still cannot quite articulate what this house means to her: 'I suppose you only really truly find out once you leave'. However, the way Noura and Zaki talk about where they currently live suggests a connection between house and home. For example, when I asked Zaki directly how he felt about this house he immediately replied with a single word: 'home'.

> Zaki: I've got most of my memories here, I've done everything mainly in- I've lived longest in this house and everybody knows this is my house and they can, like, if anyone wants me he can come over and, but that's what makes it really a house
>
> […]
>
> Noura: At the end of the day, the difference between a house and home, it's where you feel comfortable. You've got your little bedroom, your little niche where you do your own thing and it makes it a home. It's like Zaki said, it's your memories, if you didn't have your memories it's not, it's only half, the house is half your memories and half where you feel comfortable and what you mark in it.

Noura's comment about being able to make your mark on a place suggests that the family's current house is more of a home than their previous houses simply because they own it and do not need to seek a landlord's permission to hang a picture or paint a wall (see Miller 2001a). It also means that they need no longer tolerate ugly, mismatched furniture as when they lived in rented accommodation. For Faruq, however, ownership meant more than decorative freedom, it made the house more 'real' than the places they rented. It also meant security, as became clear when I asked about situations where the family have not felt at home:

> Faruq: it was the time I left Kuwait. There it was a breakthrough that I don't have a home except in Palestine. Because my father he lived in Kuwait for a few decades and in spite of that, after the Gulf War, they make the life of the Palestinians in Kuwait terribly bad. Even most of them they had to emigrate again or to leave Kuwait either by force or by threatening
>
> Noura: your sister had to leave didn't she?
>
> Faruq: yes my sister, my brother, a lot of people, hundreds of thousands they had to leave, hundreds of thousands, at least ninety per cent of the Palestinians there they left. So at the time that really kept in my brain that there will be no home other than Palestine.
>
> […]

Joanna: so is home also then um to do with a sense of security from-

Faruq: you are right

Joanna: having to move

Faruq: that's a very important point. Yes. To be secure where you are is a very important issues of defining what is the home.

Joanna: and is that financial sec- because there's a security in owning this house but then there's also political security of the homeland, there are different kinds of security.

Faruq: security generally, security not only in money-wise, the security and peace of mind, or peace of mind is a mo- is a major issue in security. If you don't have peace of mind then there is no security.

Thus, for Faruq home and homeland are interrelated concepts, which may or may not include a house. Noura, however, understands things quite differently and the struggle over definition between them is worth quoting at length:

Faruq: home is your homeland. It is your origin. From where you are. From where you want to go and live in future. Or what you dream to live in. That's the home

Noura: but do you see home as a country rather than it being a structure? Because I think when you say 'home' it can have quite a wider concept of the definition, it can be where you-

Faruq: it is the wider concept, yes, not the limited concept: where the construction is and where are the walls are built in. No. It is the wider term of the home, which is the homeland, rather than a home-house

Joanna: ok, so is this a home?

Faruq: house, house. Our house. I don't feel it is my home. No

Noura: are you allowed to have more than one house?

Faruq: it's possible, possible, it could be, it could be

Noura: I know that my home will ultimately be Palestine but [*pause*] I don't f-

Faruq: that's your house, that's where you have lived, you worked hard to get it, yes. I don't know what you think, Zaki

Zaki: I think house for me is just somewhere where you sleep, basically. I can go sleep in any house, but when it's a home it's like something you're attached to and so if someone says "do you want to go back home?" it depends. Where home? Home, as in Palestine or home as in here? If- I don't really feel this as much as my home because it's like, I don't really enjoy coming back home as much, I'd prefer like to go somewhere else

Joanna: what do you mean? Like you don't-

Zaki: I don't feel this as my home, I think, it feels like I need to search for my home, because I haven't found it yet and then that's-

Noura: I think it's important to define it. If you're saying home as a country then, yes, this is a house. But if you want to say a home as a structure because it's a-

Faruq: no, that's what I said. A home is not a- not four walls

Noura: but for me it's- but for me it's more complex than just a country or this- I think it's [*inaudible*] two parts. Because, if it's a home as a country [that we're talking about] then, no, this is a house. If we're talking "is this a home as in a structure and purely a structure?" For me, I feel this is a home, but if we're talking purely structure

Faruq: that's what I said, that's what I said. Ok? A home is not a structure

Noura: but for me it partially is. It has two different separate meanings

Faruq: fine, for you. But for me, no. That's what I said, this is my house

[*pause*]

Joanna: the house that you spent a few years in Palestine [as a child before 1948], that's- is that a home? But is that because it's in Palestine?

Faruq: yes, not because of *that building* in Palestine because-

Joanna: ah ok, so it's not the specific house

Faruq: yes.

Noura later traced the foundations of this disagreement to language, particularly her understanding of *beit* to mean simply 'house' as a structure and *balad* to mean 'homeland', whereas for her the English word 'house' carries extra connotations of 'home' and being 'where the heart is'. For her, these feelings of house-as-home exist alongside and are inseparable from her feelings about homeland (*balad*) as another kind of home:

Noura: when I was talking about my definition of what a home is […] I had a sort of Arab mentality of, like you said, *beit* or *baladi*, my country. So I was differentiating between the two. The thing is you can't. So that's why I was saying "well, no this is a home but my country's my country" but I still describe my country and my home in the same way that I described it now. In Arabic you don't have home and house. It's the structure and that is all it is. Whereas in English you've got, you know, 'home is where the heart is' or whatever and all of that, which you don't have in Arabic.

Faruq: to you that's home because of your limited- your limited learning of the Arabic language. Ok? That's why you are saying that. No. In Arabic language there are hundreds of words that can lead to the same meaning or around the same meaning.

I asked what some of these words were and we spent the next few minutes listing different kinds of dwellings (house, flat, mansion) before exploring broader vocabularies of homeland: *baladi* (my country or homeland), *watani* (my country or nation), *ardi* (my

land), *mawṭini*[9] (my home or nation). All of this seemed to reinforce Noura's point that, in Arabic, the emotional meanings of home are found more in larger scale identifications with homeland rather than in relation to a specific dwelling place, as is the case in English. The greater point here, of course, was Faruq's insistence on the exclusivity of home in relation to the Palestinian homeland. In a separate interview, Ilfat expressed similar views to Faruq: that *balad* refers to the 'bigger meaning' of home, which is homeland, so that when they are off to Palestine they would say '*raḥin ila balad*, 'we're going home' or 'we're going to the homeland', which can refer both to the country on a national sense as well as smaller scale identifications with a particular village or region. However, Ilfat also pointed out that there is something very definite about *balad* because it is always referred to as *al balad*, *the* homeland:

> Ilfat: it's not *balad*. You know, like *al balad*, it's the- THE homeland
>
> Maryam: like there's a stress on that
>
> Ilfat: you know everybody knows what is the homeland
>
> Joanna: it's singular
>
> Ilfat: singular you know […] I think it's only Palestinians. Other people that I know of like Syrians will- they'll say "we're going to Syria", "we're going to Egypt". We say "we're going *ila balad"* [*laughs*] yeah. That's the homeland. I think so anyway.

In contrast, Noura explained that she maintained the Arabic distinction between *beit* and *balad*, but also felt the emotional attachment to house articulated in expressions of house-as-home. As such, it was possible for her to refer to the family's current house as her 'home', without necessarily feeling 'at home' in Britain as a country and without relinquishing her attachment to Palestine as her 'homeland'.

This is not to say that houses are unimportant to Faruq. He says that the family's current house is more 'real' to him because he bought it with his own money, rather than renting it from others. Also, the house in Palestine where Faruq spent the first few years of his life is special to him because his grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles and cousins were all able to live together under the same roof: 'the one house is not like here, [where] you will find two or three bedrooms. You could find six, seven, eight bedrooms, a big hall […] large garden'. In Faruq's eyes it was, in short, a 'proper family

[9] This term is grammatically related to *al waṭan*, meaning political/national homeland (see page 30).

house'. From Noura's perspective, however, her father's experience of such a cherished 'house' makes his attachment to Palestine different to the attachment felt by her and her brother: 'we have a homeland to identify with but we don't have a home as in four walls, as this is where we actually live'.[10] Thus, for Noura, while Palestine is 'home' in one sense, it cannot contain the sense of 'home' she feels for their current house in Britain.

The complexity of these distinctions between house, home and homeland, and Faruq and Noura's struggle over them, seemed attributable to nationalised politics. From early on in our first interview it was clear that Faruq was a political man who believed it important to emphasise the universality of Palestinian desires to return to Palestine as a means of bolstering claims for nation-state independence. For example, when discussing the clustering of his wife's family in Jordan, Faruq was keen to make clear that this did not constitute any attachment to Jordan as a place nor that moving there in order to be close to family constituted any kind of 'return home'. 'Palestinians, if they would like to return, [it is] either their homeland or no', he said. A little later, he again claimed to speak for all Palestinians and their desires for the future:

> From my experience with the large population of Palestinians I have met all over UK, all of them they are very close to their original identity as Palestinians. Even if they are the most richest people here, senior consultants in hospitals, professors in universities, all they are proud to say they are Palestinians and they would love to return back.

For Faruq, then, one's attachment to Palestine exceeds all others and uniting around this message is the only route to a Palestinian state. However, as the conversation quoted earlier demonstrates, his children's attachment to place is more complicated and, although they later expressed their own desires to live in Palestine, Britain and their house here remains meaningful to them. However, this discussion raises questions around the linguistic politics of home that go beyond simply referring to Palestine in particular ways to touch on the feelings of being at home that can arise from language itself.

[10] This connects with Freud's theory that memories are reinforced when they have an architectural location (see Slyomovics 1998, 140)

Articulating home

Wadad described her language as becoming richer and more flowing when she speaks about her feelings of and towards home in Arabic:

> When you're describing your home it will be your "heart and soul" rather than "home" yeah? Like that. […] Like you'd say "I miss home, my heart is attached to it". […] In English you'd say "oh I miss home", in Arabic you'd say something like [*pause*] "my soul or my heart is yearning for home", it would be that sort of thing.

In this way, Arabic can articulate a range of emotional (and political) attachments to place that for some participants are not fully captured in English. But language is also comforting to hear and to use. Wadad said that she combated her feelings of homesickness by turning the television to an Arabic channel. Regardless of what is on, a soap opera, documentary or the news, and regardless of whether it has anything to do with Palestine, as long as it is in Arabic 'that kind of takes you to home, to Nablus'.

Amina described feeling most at home with those with whom she can mix Arabic and English: 'as long as I can express myself in and out of languages and in and out of cultures, not just languages but cultures, that is where I feel most at home'. Over the course of our interviews her sentences became increasingly peppered with Arabic words and expressions, which is almost how she speaks with friends. But as she said this bilingualism is also biculturalism between Arabic and English ('not necessarily American') and she told me of one particular friend, Najwa, with whom she shares both:

> Najwa is cultured in both cultures, so whether you're referring to what happened in London, how Gaza is a time bomb that is over-crowded and whatever, she will- you don't need to explain, like I don't need to explain to you. *Bas* [but] also if you're talking about, um about maybe David Mamet and his plays, she will be very comfortable with that or, you know, the difference between the word 'movie' and 'film' and you know I don't need to explain myself there either. Or I'm sitting in a restaurant and I'm asking her "how do you pronounce this?" you know, "bruschetta or bruk-" […] I don't need to know every single word. And I feel comfortable with her, with this. *Yănni* [I mean], I can say to her "how do you pronounce this?" and not really feel any negative feelings, *inno* [like] either feeling "oh I can't pronounce this" or feeling- *la' la'* [no no], that I feel very comfortable with.

Although Amina did not say why this 'Anglo-Arab business' was so homely to her, it is likely to be bound up with her British-Arabness discussed earlier, from the

adoption of a British accent at school, to her feelings of being at home in both British and Arab cultures, to her description of herself as a 'Qudsi-London girl'.[11] Moreover, those who understand this compound identity (such as her friend, Najwa) will not judge her for not knowing particular (in this case, Italian) words and will not use that 'ignorance' to pigeon-hole her as more or less Arab or English, because friends and relatives often tell her that she cannot possibly be both.

In this way, language itself and the cultures around languages can contribute to a sense of home beyond the straightforward meaning of particular words. However, paying attention to vocabulary also reveals much about how ideas and articulations of home are contested. These politics of articulating home are part of a wider politics of language, identity and belonging that participants negotiate in their everyday communication with friends and family, as well as through more formalised weekly Arabic school attendance.[12] These negotiations are not simply about learning and using Arabic in an English-speaking country but about how both English and Arabic function to connect participants to people and places in different ways (see Alexander et al 2007).

This section therefore adds to the preceding stories of how three participants came to live in Britain through combinations of marriage, education and expulsion. These stories demonstrate some of the other relationships and practices through which particular houses have accumulated meaning in the lives of their occupants; specifically, relationships of family and identity for Amina and the Al Rimawis, and practices of political solidarity for Ilfat. Indeed, as Amina says, 'the house has its own character. It's an entity. It's a living, dynamic entity. Not dynamic but it's [an] almost living entity'. In the following sections I will explore these relationships and practices in more detail, with particular attention to how participants' social lives are facilitated and constrained by the physical spaces of their houses. First, however, I turn to the ways in which houses, and the material objects within them, 'speak' to their visitors about different personal and family identities.

[11] 'Qudsi' meaning 'Jerusalemite' ('Al Quds' is the Arabic name for Jerusalem)
[12] I discuss this further in chapters five and six.

Spaces of identity

Visiting someone's house is to gain a window into their lives and their identities (Cooper Marcus 1995). In Arab cultures, as in many others, decorative efforts are often concentrated in the spaces set aside for receiving guests in order that a family might present themselves to guests in a particular way, either through religious symbols and ornaments expressing belonging to a community of believers, or through other artefacts and heirlooms expressing lineage and status (Nippa 2003). Moreover, those who have experienced a rupture from a previous location and must negotiate (dis)connections and (dis)identifications with more than one place simultaneously can situate themselves in space and time through the material objects of their lived environments (Tolia-Kelly 2004). In this way, material objects can help construct a sense of having a place in the world and with it a sense of home. In exploring the material geographies of participants' houses, I hope to gain an understanding of their 'coordinates of home' and how Palestine fits into them. The aim here is to critically examine participants' emotive connections to things, people and places, without assuming 'Palestine' or 'homeland' to be at the centre. As I have demonstrated elsewhere, the struggle for Palestine and politicised discourses of Palestinian identity have the capacity to overwhelm individual subjectivity (Long 2006). Thus although I entitle this section 'spaces of identity', in what follows I foreground participants' rights to a subjectivity that includes but is not reducible to identification with Palestine.

All the houses I visited in the course of this research said different things about the past and current lives of the people who lived there, as well as of their hopes for the future. In this section I will discuss the different ways in which Palestine is (and is not) exhibited *fil beit* and how these displays intersect with the more general clutter of home. Initially I shall focus again on the houses of Wadad and Tawfiq, and of Ilfat and Maryam, exploring the ways in which different aspects of their personal and familial histories, as well as their personal and political attachments to Palestine are manifested. From there I shall move on to discuss the bits and bobs that comprise the meaningful 'clutter' of home for several more participants and consider the importance of such 'clutter' to participants' sense of personal and family identity.

Exhibiting Palestine

At the end of our final interview, I asked Wadad if she had met anyone who held particular ideas about what it means to be Palestinian. 'Yeah. Yeah, I have', she said. The person to whom she referred was a Palestinian woman who had been raised in Turkey and Tunisia, and whose father had been in the upper echelons of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). Coming from this kind of heavily politicised background, she herself was still '*very*, very that way inclined' and maintained a similarly political atmosphere in her own family. Wadad doubted that she herself met this woman's expectations of being a Palestinian because Wadad is not politically inclined at all and so the woman may have expected this to be manifested in a house with little or no Palestinian iconography. But the woman was apparently 'surprised and pleased' to see the small embroidered runner on the windowsill in the porch, the brightly embroidered cushions arranged in an artistic pile next to the sofa in the front living room and the sketches of different parts of Jerusalem framed on the wall. Indeed, the material objects obviously relating to Palestine are relatively few in the front living room and they are completely absent in the dining room and rear family room. However, this is largely because Wadad and Tawfiq are still in the process of refurbishing their downstairs space. 'Not everything is obvious,' Wadad explained, 'but I mean later on, when I've got a proper dining room, there'll be lots of Palestinian things on there as well. So it's just because I don't have space I don't put them up but they would be everywhere', as it is in her family's house back in Nablus. Before even entering the house, however, a Palestinian (or a knowledgeable non-Palestinian) guest would have noticed the plaque next to the front door. It is made in the distinctive style of Hebron pottery, which is a very light-weight ceramic painted white with blue decoration. The plaque reads simply 'Tulkarm', written in Roman rather than Arabic alphabet, and was put up by Tawfiq partly because the house for a long time had no number outside and visitors needed a navigational aid. However, the decision to name the house 'Tulkarm' was, of course, much more significant: 'I felt, I want to call it Tulkarm to remember Tulkarm, you know. Tulkarm, my home. That's all'.

Once inside the house, the most striking objects are the ornate, Arabesque table in the front living room and the rug on the floor beneath it. Tawfiq bought the table while

on a business trip to Damascus to replace their previous English-style table which he felt was too plain: 'Nothing. Just a piece of wood'. This table, in contrast, is a work of art: hand-made in the early twentieth century with exquisite care and craftsmanship, the complex and detailed design utilises many different shades of wood as well as pearl and ivory. Wadad and Tawfiq have had a large piece of glass fitted to the top of the table in order to protect it from spills. Beneath this table is a large, antique Persian rug, which was a wedding gift to Tawfiq's mother from her father and was the only household object that she was able to get out of Palestine in 1948. The rug has been a fixture in their front living room since the room was refurbished, as it is subjected to less direct sunlight here and it is protected from too many people walking over it. Suitably insulated from harm and forming the centrepiece of the house's most public room, these two priceless objects – one a piece of cultural heritage, the other a family heirloom – are a source of everyday enjoyment, history and memory for the family and their visitors.

According to Ilfat, one of the less obvious signifiers of a Palestinian house is an abundance of plants and apparently Tawfiq had amassed quite a collection by the time Wadad moved in. Playing on the stereotype of the 'sexist Arab male', the couple explain what eventually became of all these plants:

> Wadad: He had fifty pots. I counted every one of them. And I had to look after them and spray them with mist every night. I just- and I'm not a plant person [*laughs*], I'm really not. I've got more pleasures in life. […] They only went when we did up the house because I can't shift fifty plants. I gave them away and-
>
> Tawfiq: it's the same as Britain, you know. She gave away what didn't belong to her! [*laughs*]
>
> […]
>
> Wadad: you never looked after them. I mean, if he had looked after them I wouldn't do it.
>
> Tawfiq: I looked after them before I got married but once I got married-
>
> Wadad: he found somebody else to do it!
>
> Tawfiq: I expect my wife to look after it.
>
> Wadad: "expect"?! Did you hear that? "Expect the wife"!! [*laughs*] That's another Palestinian thing!! [*laughs*].[13]

[13] Ridicule of generalised representations of Palestinians is discussed in chapter three.

Ilfat would probably sympathise with Tawfiq on this point, given that one of her living rooms is brimming with plants, which she says is one of the many things in her house that would make Palestinian visitors 'recognise home'. These plants are not necessarily native to Palestine, although Ilfat did for a while have a small basil plant from Palestine in her bedroom and in 2005 she planted two olive trees in the garden. Sadly, by the time I arrived for our final interview one of these trees had perished in the harsh north-Atlantic climate, but Ilfat is still optimistic about the second tree's chances of survival. 'They're resilient', she laughed. 'Global warming', added Maryam wryly, 'you might get lucky'. Growing olive trees in her garden was particularly important to Ilfat mainly because of their importance to Palestinians in expressing history, steadfastness, life and livelihoods:

> It's much more than a tree. It's a life- it's a life-giver almost. Because people rely a lot upon it, it produce olive oil and all that but also symbolically it's very resilient, very powerful, very strong, it lives thousands of years. It has many uh characteristics I think that people adore and associate themselves as Palestinians or you know compare themselves with the olive tree. Always, in many songs Palestinians are like olive trees, rooted um resilient uh enduran- enduring, patient, all this you know […] That's on one hand, but also spiritually um it's mentioned in the Qur'an more than once and it's, the name is the *shajara mubaaraka*, the blessed tree. So um, it's- yeah, people take that also as something very important yeah.

Apart from all the plants, there is a lot of more obvious Palestinian iconography on display on the ground floor of Ilfat and Maryam's house and almost none elsewhere. In the same living room as the plants, for example, there are lots of embroidered cushions of all shapes and sizes, and the long sofas lining the walls give the room the feel of a *diwan* (a guest-room or -house). Two dominant narratives of Palestinian identity are on display in the hallway: a large tapestry depicting al-Haram al-Sharif (the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem), as well as antique keys hanging on the wall to represent *al Nakba* and the loss of 'home' (Ramadan 2009). More keys, this time with lengths of chain, are on display in the formal living and dining room, along with two small landscapes of Jerusalem constructed out of pearl. The mantelpiece in this living room is adorned with, among other things, large pieces of the distinctive, near-white Jerusalem stone and three pots of soil from Beit Awwa, Hebron, and Jerusalem. In this

way, the very substance of Palestine as well as its symbolism is part of the fabric of Ilfat and Maryam's house.

Although I had been struck by the amount of Palestinian iconography in Ilfat and Maryam's house, which contained by far the most of any of the participants I visited, Noura Al Rimawi (who is a friend of Maryam) did not think there was that much. Her father explained that other people they know 'overdo it sometimes' by putting a Palestinian flag in every room and in every hallway. Their own house, in contrast, is much more subtle, with only a lamp with the Dome of the Rock carved into the base in their formal, front living room, an embroidered sampler in the hallway and a few embroidered cushions in the family living room. For Noura, conspicuous displays of paraphernalia are not what make a house 'Palestinian':

> It's the home atmosphere and the people and the talks and things that makes it Palestinian. You can go into a home without a single piece of tapestry and it can be much more Palestinian. For example, if you go to Maryam's home, if you sit in the sitting room, um, the one with all the little toys[14] in, there isn't much Palestinian stuff there. Like, she's got a picture of, you know, the map but there isn't much Palestinian stuff there. But you go into the home and it's the feel, it's the people, it's the talk, it's- and it makes it very, very Palestinian.

A few minutes later, Noura expanded on this crucial point about 'practising Palestinian-ness', to talk about how objects can distract people from the ways in which identity can work on a very personal and invisible level:

> I think it's something that's inside. It's not proving it to others. I don't have to have a house with tapestries. I think it's nice but you don't have to have it for it to be a Palestinian house. […] For me, I think it's the behaviour and I think Maryam's mum's house is the biggest example. Yes it's got [a Palestinian plaque] outside it and it has little bits and bobs, and you'll go into the guest room and- You can't- I don't think you have anyone more committed than Maryam's mum in regards to Palestine, she's extremely active. But you don't see her house as drenched with this and that and Palestinian flags everywhere. It's inside and that's where it needs to be.

For Noura, then, identity can be displayed in 'little bits and bobs' *fil beit* but this manifestation does not make one person more 'Palestinian' than the next. Loud declarations of identity through conspicuous displays of flags and other iconography suggest a reliance on these objects to bolster one's affiliation and therefore a weakened

[14] This room also had many plants in it and is discussed further in 'The social lives of houses', below.

and superficial identification with Palestine. None of the houses I visited during the course of this research contained any such conspicuous displays, only 'bits and bobs' here and there, and sometimes not even that. Rather, the stuff of people's houses was much more often comprised of general objects of personal significance, sometimes in relation to Palestine and other times not. Maryam described this as her 'clutter', the kind of things that anyone else would regard as worthless but are invaluable to her. It is the presence of this clutter that has made her sparse new rented house into a kind of home and it is to the significance of clutter in other participants' lives that I now turn.

The meaningful clutter of home

The majority of the objects in Ilfat and Maryam's living rooms had a very personal significance to the family, especially Ilfat: 'Everything has a story'. She has a particular fondness for natural objects, such as ornate pieces of driftwood found on a nearby beach or seeds collected during a picnic in the forest one weekend. There is a special story behind the dried rose petals, too, as these were collected during a visit to the Lake District with Isma'il to celebrate their anniversary. There had been a wedding taking place in the hotel where they were staying and the garden was covered with discarded rose petals after the celebrations:

> It was everywhere, so I said, "Isma'il, I'm picking them up". He said, "are you crazy?!" [*laughs*] I said, "yes, I am!" So I started picking them and it's lovely, gorgeous, you know, colour. So I picked up and when I picked up a lot, Isma'il started helping. Baba, you know, he got encouraged and we collected them together [*laughs*].

Ilfat's passion for collecting things has always been with her but it has been allowed free rein since moving to their enormous Victorian house because there is so much space to fill. She traces this slightly excessive habit to the childhood home she lost, and the part of herself and her history that went with it:

> Ilfat: Sometimes I try to analyse myself: why do I like collecting? You know, because it's, you know, it's a bit too much. I think because maybe my brain works- when we moved out of Palestine we lost everything completely, you know, we had nothing. The only thing that I came out with were the two dresses that I was wearing because my mum couldn't even carry a handbag because it was, you know, um uh she was carrying my baby brother and four other kids so she couldn't really carry anything […] so we had nothing else but what we were wearing. And I think maybe because of that and the feeling of just not having anything. I loved my books. Like, for example, in Palestine, my schoolbag- I was

> fond of books and I collected lots of, you know- books with images were very, very rare at that- this, you know, that time in my life in Palestine, you know. You don't, you didn't see many uh, many pictures in books but whenever I found something with a picture, you know, I will cut it out and keep it. So little things like that I didn't have, I lost with the war. You know, my schoolbag when we came back home after the six days were over, my schoolbag was open and all my books were torn because the home was vandalised like many homes and many things were stolen, like my mum's stuff, gold and, you know, bracelets and things like that. But other things were just vandalised, including my schoolbag and my books so I think with this loss you feel, you know, this is how I think about it. I don't know whether it's right or wrong
>
> Joanna: yeah maybe you're trying to reclaim a little bit?
>
> Ilfat: maybe, yeah, not to lose memories.

Although Ilfat said, half jokingly and half ruefully, 'I don't think anybody has more clutter than me', Maryam was quick to defend her collection of objects: 'it's still, like, individual clutter', she said, 'they've all come from somewhere'. It is the personal importance of all the clutter and their associated stories that, for Maryam, help to make a house into a home. At the time we spoke, Maryam and her new husband were living in a rented house and were due to move in the next couple of months to another part of the country, where they had put in an offer on a three-bedroom, end-of-terrace house. Her ambitions for this house were very modest, centring only on the little things, like having a cat and all their stuff around, that would make the house feel really theirs: 'I think it's just, you know, those things: having your little pet and putting your own stamp on the house that makes it yours, rather than just yeah, just a place, isn't it then?'

For Maryam, however, it is both objects *and* relationships that contribute to a sense of home. Her main experience of this was from the months she spent living in France and Spain, as part of her degree. In France she had a very small room of her own, the emptiness and unhomeliness of which was ameliorated not only by 'having all your bits and pieces around you' but also 'keeping things social', for example, by having too many friends over for mint tea or inviting people to stay:

> It was so funny. It was, like, a tiny little room with, like, a bed and a table and then a tiny little space in between them and I had loads of people come to stay because my friend ended up homeless for a while. "Oh come and stay at mine!" as if it was so massive and so we're all squished there and you can't get out of bed until the other person has like moved because you don't want to trample them. It was brilliant.

Maryam felt differently during her second placement in Spain because there she was sharing a flat with two other girls: 'so that felt a bit more like home because you're sort of coming home to something […] I think that's it: having people around you, relationships'. Such connections between objects, relationships and identity can be difficult as well as joyful, however, as Amina's experience demonstrates.

When Amina and her husband, Burhan, moved into their house the decoration was very neutral because it had previously been let to a succession of Japanese families, who would be posted to London for a few years and then move on. They installed a fireplace as a centrepiece to the living room and, upon lifting up the carpet, they discovered a beautiful parquet floor as well. Amina also liked that there were lots of extra rooms with their own bathrooms and that an extension had been done in a loving manner, which gave the house 'character' while still allowing them to make it their own:

> Character came with the house but we made it come alive […] We turned everything into something that says *"Burhan ou Amina"* [Burhan and Amina] and in that I really like it. I like the address. I like the bathroom. It has little blue flowers and, you know, everybody that goes in [says] "that's Amina."

Even before the couple had put their own stamp on it, one of the things that had attracted Amina to the house was the space, 'because I have lots of stuff', especially books, which are too numerous to share a room with anything else and too much a part of who she is to even consider putting them in storage. It is clear from our discussions that Amina's sense of herself is closely bound up with academic achievements and political involvements (both her own and those of her family) and that her books and files are a physical manifestation of that work. After finishing school in Britain, Amina remained here to attend university, eventually completing three undergraduate degrees followed by a postgraduate course in London: 'like Julius Caesar, I came. I conquered. I got my degree. I went home'. She returned to her family in Palestine for three years, during which time she worked in her father's business, conducted her own research (which she later published) and threw herself as much as she could into the cultural and artistic life of the country: 'I did everything that I longed to do, but there came a time when [I thought], "and now what?"' So she decided to return to Britain in the late-80s

in order to do a Master's and PhD, and since then her life has become a 'very different story'. Where before, when she was attending boarding school, Amina had to decide every year if she wanted to continue before reapplying for a visa, now 'every year I'm here because I was here the previous year, rather than by active choice'. It began with the PhD for the first few years and then 'it kept rolling' from studying to politics to family:

> Amina: Actually it's a probing question because now I have to think maybe that's why I'm not really so happy because it's just being here and I probably am a person who needs to [*inaudible*]. I need to be here actively, you know [*inaudible*] predetermined decision [*coughs*]. You know, the Palestinian in me just can't just let things roll you have to [*inaudible*]
>
> Joanna: you have to have a purpose
>
> Amina: yes.

Although Amina acknowledges that family itself is a kind of purpose and she understands only too well the enormous amount of work involved in being a mother of small children, she regards it as 'being' and 'just to "be" is not a situation that I enjoy', she says, 'I actually need to be purposeful'. Her Masters degree, her involvement in student political movements and her publications are her 'purpose' for living as well as for being in Britain:

> I was doing it for two or three years, I was extremely active […] it was very, very productive couple of years for me, two or three years. And then things sort of took over and I slowly lost myself in the process of raising a family and being involved in that, which I gather is something that happens often. Um, you sort of wake up- Pink Floyd said, uh what's the word? God bless them, they said that, "one day you wake up and ten years have passed and you just wonder 'what did you do with ten years?'" I used to listen to that and think "what?! Definitely not ten years" but it's actually been thirteen, fourteen years for me.

This gradual engulfing of Amina's professional and political ambitions by family is echoed in the way her initial aspirations for her house have become buried in the clutter of a young family, from which she soon hopes to excavate them. For example, when they first moved into the house, Amina had wanted to be able to keep one room as a 'work in progress', where the daily reproduction of their lives (the laundry, for example) could be kept out of the way, along with all the boxes you never get around to unpacking and the little tasks you never have the time to do: '*Bas, tabăn* [but, ok] now

ten years on, this is not going to happen. The boxes [are going] to be where you are. Where you sit, they are going to be'. In this way, the mess of everyday life, particularly with children, inevitably spills out of place, as it did in Amina and Burhan's small flat in central London after the arrival of their eldest son and which it continues to do with their two daughters who arrived a few years later, to the point that it now threatens to take over everywhere. 'I really can't stand the mess', she says, although her description of what their lives were like a year previously suggests that the situation has been much worse. Back then the children were involved in a dizzying array of activities, including gymnastics, ballet, swimming, tennis, kick-boxing, French, piano, violin: 'I did what most middle-class people do in this country, and even back home if you're in Ramallah, so it did get a little bit too much at times'. Getting through Wednesday was a particular achievement because Amina also taught that day:

> So, Wednesday: dumped them at school; go do my college, stu- *yănni* [I mean] work, teach there, then you come back, get them; then get a moment of rest, Zayd gets changed in the car, does his gymnastics; the girls go get their sandwich, they come back, they go da da da da. And then I came home at six o'clock […] the entrance was like this [*piled high*] with clothes and change […] because there are three boxes for Arabic, there are three changes of clothes for them, for their various activities or pianos or, I mean, guitars or whatever, and everything got dumped there.

Once the children were fed and put to bed, Amina would tackle the mess in the hall and by the time Burhan came home around midnight the place would be spotless again and ready to be turned upside-down again tomorrow. Since Amina and Burhan are now separated, however, everyone's lives have changed, including that of the house. To begin with, the children's busy schedules have had to be scaled back and Amina no longer has the kind of Wednesday just described. However, the mess in certain rooms remains and Amina reads the decline of their relationship (and her sense of herself in the process) in the physical spaces of the house and her feelings towards it: 'when I look at the house, I see it as I see myself: it's in disrepair now. It looks exactly how I feel about myself'.

Amina is determined, however, that 'soon' things will change. The combined living and dining room, for example, is where the family spend most of their time and it is therefore where everyone's mess is focused and is hardest to avoid. The room stretches the entire length of the house, from the front to the back garden. Towards the

front is the dining area with a large table and chairs in the centre, which is barely visible beneath the large electronic keyboard, other assorted instruments, sheet music and children's homework. An upright piano stands against one wall and on the opposite side a fish tank beneath a set of shelves. There is a fireplace in the centre of the far wall, which separates the dining room from the living area with its sofas, coffee-table, television and more bookshelves. In the very middle of the room is a children's table football set that Burhan bought, which she hates and has no place in her ambitions for the room:

> Soon, just like I'm going to pick up, I don't want this here. Either the whole room changes and becomes a family room or this goes: dining room- the dining table goes and everything changes. I hate that [*gestures towards the shelving and television units*]. I drew it, I designed all of this *bas* [but] the man who made it didn't make it well, so you have all this spaghetti business there [*points towards wires dangling from the television*]. I don't want a big TV. I want a tiny, tiny TV. I don't want TV to be a focus of my room*, mathalan* [for example], you know, I don't want- *inno* [like] I have five thousand books for the kids and they can't touch any of them [*points towards high shelves*].

Amina's plans *will* be implemented, she assured me, but not just yet:

> Now I'm allowing myself to wallow. I'm allowing the house to be in this shape. The house is just like me, it really is just like me and I feel sad, just like I- I feel sad for myself, not sorry for myself but sad. *Inno yănni heek, yănni*, [So I mean, here, I mean] you know, because you know Palestine so much, *yănni ana bint* [I mean, I'm the daughter of] Ghassan Idilbi*, bint* Radwa Khouri, I end up *here?!* At this age of forty-eight. I end up at forty-eight going through *this* kind of pain?! *Leesh* [why]*?!* At this age I should be a professor in a university or I should, *yănni*, I shouldn't be here now. Not sorry for myself but it's sad. The same with the house, it shouldn't be in this shape but soon, you will see, I'll email you, 'come visit me'. It won't stay like this. But now? Let it be, *khallas* [that's it].

That said, Amina has already made one change to the house, which is to take in a lodger. As well as providing extra income, giving over part of her house to a lodger means that she no longer has to 'deal with the mess in that room'. The next day she said she planned to empty her son's room, possibly in order to let it out as well, and will no longer have to deal with the mess in that room either. In a way, then, the emotional challenges that go with opening up her house to strangers are ameliorated to an extent by the freedom of having fewer rooms to 'deal with'.

Amina's story, and those of Maryam, Ilfat, Tawfiq and Wadad before, demonstrates how domestic practices and material objects intersect in the (re)production and exhibition of individual and familial identities in many different ways. The few items in Wadad and Tawfiq's house, for instance, were chosen out of memory, aesthetics and a little politics. Similarly, Ilfat's living rooms are full of small and large objects of great personal significance, in terms of family memories, individual passions for nature and collecting, as well as personal and political connections to Palestine. Finally, Amina's story demonstrates how changes in one's life, one's purpose and one's identity are related to the material objects and everyday spaces of domestic family life. However, Amina's experience also reiterates her view that a house is an entity that comes to life through dwelling. I develop this notion in the final section by examining through the lens of hospitality how participants' houses figure in their wider social worlds. By way of introduction to this discussion, I shall explore Jameel's thoughts on interrelationship of people and their houses in terms of external and internal environments, the wider social world and inner personalities. I also note some broad differences between domestic architectures of Britain and the Middle East, including the politics of adaptation between the two.

A psychology of domestic space

As an architect specialising in domestic projects, Jameel has a particularly keen sense of the relationship between people and their domestic spaces, and the importance of creating an environment where the two work together:

> [Clients] think it is, "ok beyond this door…" they open the door and you have a nice extension. And I say "no, it isn't like this actually. It's how you enter the house, when you go into that extension or upstairs, all that has to tie together." […] And so when you finish with it it's a trip; like a trip from the front door to wherever you're going. It's a trip actually, it's a trip of life really, you know. I'm not exaggerating.

Jameel regards his work as 'expansions' rather than 'extensions', which will transform a family's house into their home: 'It's a total thing'. Working in London he frequently has to work with the L-shaped footprint of Victorian and Edwardian terraced houses, which limits what he can do. However, his favourite strategy for making a more holistic environment is to create 'courts': 'bringing internal spaces and external

spaces together in the middle of the house' in the manner of Arab houses discussed in the literature review. These courts are achieved by expanding the rear of the house laterally so that it fills the width of the plot, while leaving a section of open space between the front living room and the expanded kitchen. Glass doors on opposite sides of the court would, when open, connect the living room at the front house and the kitchen at the rear, whilst maintaining three separate spaces when the doors are closed. Another glass door or window on the third side of the court prevents the hall becoming a tunnel and ensures that outside light also filters in, connecting all the spaces on the ground floor of the house (see Figure 1).

This 'court' feature is relatively common in town houses of a certain calibre in the Arab world, as a result of both the arid environment that characterises much of north Africa, the Arabian Gulf and the Middle East and social demands for family privacy. According to Noor (1986), people closed their houses against the glaring sun and the endlessly dry and plant-less landscape, and turned them inwards towards a little cultivated oasis at the centre of the building, with its fountain, its plants and shadiness, whilst retaining the open sky above (see also Bougdah and Sharples 2010). This would be the case if a single nuclear family occupied the whole house. If the house was shared by several families of the same *ħamouleh* or clan, the courtyard would be more of a working space, containing the cistern for drinking, washing and watering animals, rather than a decorative fountain (Canaan 1933). In either case, the courtyard provided a haven during the heat of the day, where family members could spend time outside but out of public view, and during the night it acted as a sink for cool air, which would flow into the surrounding rooms. The overall aim was 'to create a positive relationship between the external environmental conditions and the interior of each house' (Nour 1986, 62).

Figure 1: Footprint of a typical English terraced house

Image on the left based on Long (1993), image on right based on Jameel's design. Proportions are estimated.

Jameel grew up in Lebanon after his family fled Palestine in 1948 and although he studied architecture in New York and has been based in London for over thirty years, his professional (as well as personal) 'roots' lie in the principles of Mediterranean, and more broadly Arab, architectural design, which he believes could improve British houses:

> You know the saying that a man's castle is his home, like that? Once you go in, that's it, you know, the rest is to hell with it or something. It is different, you know, when you go into an Arab *home*, you bring the outside with you. There are courts, speaking- conceptually speaking it's- while when you go into a Western home, [*inaudible*] you go in to shut the world [out], shut it. […] Being from the Mediterranean- I do like, I would like to do that [shut the world out], yes, but also bring the outside in and so I encourage people: they didn't [just] buy the home, the inside of the home, they also bought the plot of the home. They didn't buy the sun, unfortunately. You don't get much of it. Let's try and bring it when it shines, let's bring it inside the home. Like that. Because the outside is part of your inside.

When bringing these principles to bear on English domestic architecture, the key is to expand the house in the same 'rhythm' as the spaces on the original blueprint:

> The existing house has a relationship, has proportions also, yeah? […] So when they want to extend I don't just say "let's extend a metre or two metres" I look at the house itself, the body and say "how is it divided, you know? How did the Victorians divide this damn thing, you know?" And I usually, I follow and do that division. So when I enlarge […] I'm enlarging with that same rhythm and you will feel that.

Despite being a modernist architect himself, he traces the roots of these ideas to relationships of height, width, materials and spaces set down by classical architecture. With these principles comes an understanding of spaces within a house being inherently linked to one another even when they are closed off. And yet the flexibility of this design also satisfies Jameel's philosophy of individuality within family and his belief in the importance of domestic spaces that can adapt to their occupants' desires, specifically the desire for one's own space. According to him, families and their houses are a single entity but people also exist as individuals within a family-house collective and it is therefore vitally important for everyone in the family-house unit to have a place of their own within it:

> I believe very, very much that each person, each one of us has his own world in him or her. They are what they are, regardless of family or friends or wife or daughter or boyfriend or girlfriend. There are- there are things that we are, yes? And I like to

> create that in that space; that one or the other can actually go in and *whooit whooit* sit down, hide and whatever, or contemplate their own personalities. […] Many people say "oh but we are husband and wife, shall we do things together all the time?" No, wait, we can do things but there are some, even if it's one day a year where you want to freak out and go and be yourself. Because it ri- it enriches the relationship […] and this goes into the psychology of the space that we design. It's so important.

The value of being able to dissolve and reconstitute spaces is bound up with relationships between a house and its occupants, and the natural and social world beyond its walls. In this way, as discussed in chapter two, people and domestic space are intimately interrelated not only in terms of practices and physical spaces (Lefebvre 1991; Llewellyn 2004), but also in terms of external and internal environments, the wider social world and inner personalities (Bryden 2004; Dohmen 2004). At the same time, however, the architectures of both British houses and Palestinian-Arab family life must accommodate one another, synchronising with one another's rhythms. In the next section I explore the interior spaces of two particular houses and the ways in which they are and are not synchronised with the social lives of the families living there.

The social lives of houses

Rules surrounding hospitality are strong in many Arab cultures and families are expected, where possible, to reserve a space in their house for entertaining guests, either for a few hours or overnight (Nippa 2003). Historically, guests in one-room 'peasant' houses must share the normal family space, whereas middle class families living in more complex houses would set aside a room – *diwan* or *muḍif* – for entertaining guests (Al-Shahi 1986, 30). Some large houses belonging to wealthy families have a long central hallway or *liwan*, which is used as a sitting area and from which various living rooms and guest bedrooms branch off (Canaan 1933). Amina's parents live in a 'central hall house' of this kind:

> The hall has been used for weddings, for funerals, for parties. […] And you're talking Jerusalem weddings: you invite everybody and, you know, the whole world and their sister and their best pet […] I guess that's probably what I mistakenly believed this house [in London] can do but of course not.

As Amina's comment demonstrates, Arab-Palestinian cultures of hospitality can be difficult to maintain in British houses. However, she also told me of a Palestinian

expression which states that 'the small house hosts as many loved ones as possible'. As such, this section explores the intersections of participants' ambitions for and practices of hospitality and the actual spaces of their houses in Britain. Drawing in particular on stories of Wadad and Tawfiq's struggle over their kitchen, and Ilfat's open-house policy, I explain how the physical design of participants' houses in Britain can enable and constrain social lives in various ways.

Inflexible neighbours and spaces

The previous section closed with Jameel's philosophy on synchronising the relationships between a house, its occupants, and the natural and social world. For Wadad, however, achieving such a balance was a major struggle. She moved into her house a little over twenty years ago after marrying Tawfiq who was already living and working in Britain and who had bought this house a few years previously:

> I think the first time I saw the house, I just- I felt I *really* didn't like it at all. I think that's stuck with me. […] It was awful. It really was. I walked in, I thought- I remember saying to him, "can we not move?" [*inaudible*] He said to me, "no" [*inaudible*] [*laughs*].

The house in question is a three-bedroom semi-detached house and is part of a suburban development which is within commuting distance of London. It is not clear precisely when the houses were built but their architecture is reminiscent of what Arthur Edwards (1981) has termed the post-World War II 'Anglo-Scandinavian' style. Such houses were cheaper versions of Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright's 'white-box buildings'. By replacing expensive features, such as the flat roof and the steel and glass building materials, with less-expensive sloping roofs with straight ridges over bricks and mortar, developers were able to provide simple, comfortable, saleable houses on a large scale. The result, however, has been rather monotonous estates of flat-fronted, box-like houses, with clean, simple lines formed by undivided casements and tile-hung panels. Each house in such a development would have its own garage, although on Wadad and Tawifq's road these are off-set at the rear of the house and are accessed by a driveway that is shared with the detached-side neighbour. This may have been done in order to cultivate some sense of community among neighbours or perhaps out of 'efficiency' and a desire to fit in more houses. Whatever the motivation, this

layout gives Wadad the feeling of being 'crammed' onto an estate and it interferes with her privacy:

> I don't like to be too close to neighbours, in a sense. Like, we share a driveway […] this I don't like at all. Um, I don't know, it strips you of your privacy, I think. […] And again the walls are so thin, I mean, when their daughters cry I can hear and I'm sure she can hear us. I don't like that either, I don't think. Why? If you're going to live in a house just make it your own little world.

Being unable to come and go from her own house without the cooperation of one neighbour and knowing that the chatter, tears and laughter of her family life are aurally shared with the other, denies Wadad and her family a little world of their own. This does not mean, however, that they seek to completely cut themselves off. Wadad and Tawfiq regularly have dinner parties with lots of friends, as well as an open house at Eid when up to fifty people may be visiting at the same time. Rather, the people from whom she would like to be cut off are her neighbours, who in her experience are not only unfriendly and unsociable but possibly racist and xenophobic. Several occurrences have brought them to this interpretation.

Tawfiq recounted a dispute over a line of mature trees in their garden, which their immediate neighbour complained blocked the sunlight. Tawfiq therefore invited his neighbour to have the trees trimmed to his liking and offered to meet the cost. However, he returned one day to find the trees felled, leaving a line of stumps a few feet tall. A second example concerns recent refurbishments Wadad and Tawfiq made to their downstairs living room, which involved many workmen and trucks coming and going. During the months it took to complete the work, Wadad received various insinuating comments from neighbours about the noise and the number of delivery vans on the street, and at one point a Union Jack appeared on someone's lawn. On another occasion, Wadad and Tawfiq had friends over for the evening and, because there is so little space to park around the house, they parked a little way down the road. Later, when they returned to their car, they found a note on it saying 'please move your vehicle from outside my house'.

Within these apparently everyday, petty squabbles is an additional cultural element which discourages Wadad from doing as she pleases or inviting whomever she

wants to her own house. Hosting the kind of large gatherings she enjoys, for instance, is problematic because of these parking issues:

> I feel I have to be very careful and tell, before I invite people tell them "will you park along this side and not this side?" And, you know, "please be careful how you park" and it's all this hassle.

Wadad is even reluctant to have her family come to visit because her mother wears a headscarf: 'so I wonder, you know, will they be polite? Will they be rude? Will they ignore her? It's things like that'. Thus for Wadad, the relationship between her house and the outside world is a problematic one, largely because she has very little power over which parts of the outside world are drawn in, as she is inescapably involved with her difficult neighbours and she therefore struggles to host friends and family in her house as she would like. Wadad feels that many of these issues would be resolved by moving to a detached house, surrounded by its own land, which would allow her to invite whomever she likes without worrying about or requiring permission from her neighbours. What all of this demonstrates is that, while hospitality is about inviting people in, it is also about having the infrastructure to do so. That is, a house in a physical and social context which allows family and guests to feel welcome, at home, *bidoon kulfeh,*[15] whilst at the same time preserving family privacy. Furthermore, hospitality is about having interior spaces that enable desired practices of socialising as well as a togetherness of family life. In this respect, Wadad's house falls short once again, especially the kitchen.

When Tawfiq bought the house thirty years ago, its small, enclosed rooms were a perfect example of 'modern', 'efficient' post-war British domestic architecture (Edwards 1981). In order to create a more open feel, he had several dividing walls knocked through, creating a spacious hallway and guest reception room, which leads through a dining room all the way to the family room at the back. He also added a porch so that the front door did not open directly into the living room:

> Tawfiq: Some of my English friends said, "look, if you're going to open [up these rooms], English people don't like open space", he meant by the older [people]. Now younger people they will like this, you know. They [the older people] like closed room. So you can't let, you can't go inside from outside straightaway into-

[15] An expression for feeling 'at home', literally meaning 'without trouble' (Elias 1913)

Joanna: oh, you need a little box for them to come into and then-

Tawfiq: and then enter this place, you know.

In the course of these modifications, however, the kitchen remained small, partly because Tawfiq was a bachelor when he bought the house and it suited his modest culinary needs:

> I'm not going to live in the kitchen, you know. I take one hour to cook my meal, one meal a day when I come back from work, so why do I need this big kitchen? What am I going to do with it, you know? I'm not going to eat in the kitchen. But I mean for Wadad maybe it's- Wadad is different. She need a big kitchen because she maybe need to stand or the worktop-

Later in the interview, a good-natured argument broke out after I commented again on the size of the kitchen:

> Tawfiq: excuse me, what is the intention of a woman in the kitchen? What she will do in the kitchen? Yeah? You going to need to bake, you need to cook, and you can have four-
>
> Wadad: burners.
>
> Tawfiq: burners on the- yeah? And then you have an oven and- two ovens, yeah, and you have a fridge to keep your vegetables and things like that, yeah, and then you're going to cook. So what- you have two hands, what are you going to do with a bigger kitchen and a small kitchen?
>
> Wadad: have a table. Make it more of a social space where you- while you're cooking somebody else is doing their homework, somebody else is chatting.
>
> Tawfiq: how can you do your homework when someone else is chatting?
>
> Wadad: no, when you're on your own.
>
> Tawfiq: how can he do his homework when someone is chatting?
>
> Wadad: no, no, no, not at the same time [*pause*] [*inaudible*] shared space. But if there are two, it's absolutely crowded.

It is important to note here that Tawfiq comes from the established Al Mazini family of Tulkarm, where they lived in a large, two-storey villa with a veranda running all the way around the outside. In 1948, however, the family were forced to flee to relatives in Gaza and remained there for several years before moving to Egypt, where Tawfiq grew up and attended university. Although he did not tell me about the family's house there, I later discovered from Wadad that, in Egypt, families of a certain stature

frequently employ a cook, which might explain the low importance Tawfiq places on kitchens:

> It's not part of the house, you know. To him it's not part of the house. It's irrelevant. This is how he thinks. Because to me that is central: it's the hub of the house […] Tawfiq's upbringing was- they had a cook, so to him it's- a kitchen is a kitchen. This is why in other houses you have the table in the kitchen and the family buzzing around there and it's very central. With his family it was completely different: in Egypt people have cooks and it's usually a male cook who'll cook and bring out the food. So the centre of the house is a completely different room. I suppose it's the TV room. So this is where he comes from. [In my family] every house we've ever had there was always a big table in the kitchen, which we sat round and chatted. We never did our homework on it but we sat around and chatted and- just while my mother was cooking or washing up or whatever, we'll be there chatting and it was very central. […] They've got a very big kitchen in Egypt and they don't have a kitchen table in the middle. It's very strange. Because obviously the cook doesn't need a table he can work on the worktops.

Thus for a large part of Tawfiq's life, the kitchen has figured as the domain of hired domestic labour. However, he also clearly regards kitchens in a patriarchal modernist sense as a site of (women's) work, which should be designed for the sole purpose of conducting that work efficiently. Echoing the disjuncture between architectural design and practices of inhabitation discussed by Llewellyn (2004), Tawfiq praises the modernist functionality of their small, u-shaped kitchen, which possesses the requisite technology and can be crossed in two small steps. As Johnson (2006) and Supski (2006) demonstrate, however, women hold multiple subjectivities within the house (wife, mother, housewife and homemaker) and kitchens are therefore multi-functional spaces for practices of relaxation, socialising, eating and helping with homework, as well as of work. This is how Wadad recalls the kitchen of her childhood house and she laments her small kitchen in England because it denies any such multi-functionality and is almost impossible to change: extending the kitchen into the back garden would obstruct access to the garage and would do little more than transform the kitchen into a galley; extending out through the third wall would involve sacrificing their dining room and would create a barrier between their front and rear living rooms (see Figure 2).

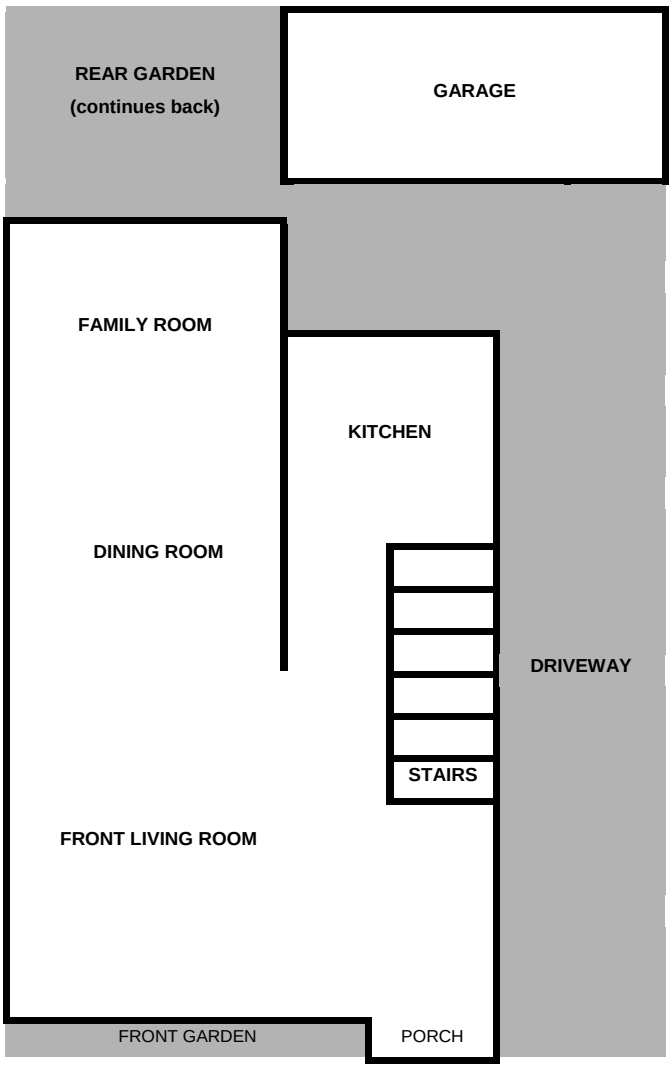

Figure 2: Wadad and Tawfiq's ground floor

Proportions estimated.

> Wadad: I think what they've done next door is have it in an L-shape so the kitchen came out along this way [along the rear of the house], which would have probably made more sense but then what would we do with our sitting area?
>
> Joanna: because most people wouldn't have two sitting rooms, would they?
>
> Wadad: most of them have a little side-table against a wall and that's it and that would be their space and then they would have their television here, where the chimney was and that's it. But it doesn't work with us because we do have people come over and it just wouldn't work, so we need as much seating space as possible and this was the only way to do it, to keep the kitchen small.

Although many large and small British households have for centuries maintained a front 'parlour' for guests and special occasions, this was replaced in the post-World War II era by a single, large living room (Long 1993). Although Tawfiq and Wadad have managed to reclaim this guest-space, or *diwan*, it has been at the expense of their capacity to alter the kitchen. This is a source of continual irritation to Wadad who struggles to host large Arab dinner parties out of a kitchen that is not only small but also tucked away from the rest of the house and her guests. Wadad intends to work around this issue by making changes to the dining room and family room. In the dining room she plans to have a new table and to put in a bureau to store all the cutlery and crockery that she needs when they have people round: 'So when I'm entertaining I can-everything is available'. This will both free up space in the kitchen and will reduce the amount of to-ing and fro-ing between the kitchen and the dining room, allowing her to spend more time with her guests. In turn the family room will acquire a new sofa, one side will become a small library for the books Tawfiq currently keeps in the dining room, and the over-sized television they inherited from a friend will be moved elsewhere.

In sum, the place of Wadad and Tawfiq's house in their social lives must be negotiated, between difficult neighbours and invited guests on one hand, and between open, sociable spaces and a small kitchen on another (for a discussion of domestic space and self-determination see Percival 2002). Their experience is specific to the kind of house they live in, which was designed for a particular model of family and pattern of domestic life (Fincher 2004), and is also coloured by other lifestyles and other kinds of houses in which they have lived. Indeed, the manipulation of domestic space undertaken by Wadad and Tawfiq echoes strategies employed by those in other contexts

to exploit the 'spatial opportunities' open to them (Datta 2008). Their experiences also emphasise the interplay of 'inner' and 'outer' spaces of house and home (Bryden 2004; Dohmen 2004), as Wadad and Tawfiq's feelings for the house and their sense of unhomeliness within it can be traced to their tense encounters with neighbours.

In a broader sense, however, the different affections Wadad and Tawfiq hold for their house have partly resulted from their different routes to living in it. Tawfiq had come to work in Britain when he was a bachelor and had bought the house for himself, albeit with a view to one day getting married. Wadad, on the other hand, came directly from her family's large house in Nablus to a house and an estate that she would not have chosen. The expensive housing market of the southeast of England and their desire to send their sons to private schools has prevented them from moving, although Tawfiq did promise Wadad that if they are ever able to move back to Palestine 'you'll have a big kitchen, *insha'allah* [God willing]'.

'Oh they have a key, too?'

The physical space and social life of Ilfat and Maryam's house could hardly be more different to that of Wadad and Tawfiq. Ilfat says of her house: 'It has a nice feeling, you know, and I feel it and everybody who comes feels it. You know, people tell me it's just very, very peaceful. Very nice'. Like Wadad and Tawfiq, Ilfat and Maryam live in a semi-detached house on a suburban estate in the northwest of England. However, they share none of Wadad's complaints of being cramped or having to compromise their privacy, as their double-fronted Victorian house boasts thick stone walls, very generous rooms with high ceilings, as well as a large garden on three sides. Moreover, their house is part of a pseudo-arcadian suburban development built in the late-nineteenth century for wealthy families to escape the polluted and overpopulated city. Thus the wide roads around Ilfat and Maryam's house gently meander between large, detached Italianate and neo-gothic villas set on spacious plots of land, with the 'twinned' (i.e. semi-detached) houses such as their own probably being added later (Edwards 1981).

Entering the house through the front door, you arrive in a wide hallway flanked on both sides by two large reception rooms. The one on the right is a dining room/living room and the one on the left is a bright, family room. I refer to these as the 'wood living room' and the 'plant living room', respectively, in order to foreground the

material objects which characterise them and which are so important to Ilfat. However, they could equally be referred to by their different uses (dining room and living room) or their different occupants (the men's room and the women's room), as this is how guests frequently divide themselves when there are large numbers of people in the house or when the family are there alone. To describe a little about the 'wood living room', next to the window is a sofa suite and a pair of ornate wooden chairs surrounding a small table, which is overflowing with dried rose petals and bowls of seeds, while various natural pieces of wood and other carved wooden objects are nestled beneath it. On the other side of the room is a large dining table, which is separated from the sofas by a large fireplace laden with plants and family portraits, as well as pots of soil from different parts of Palestine and large pieces of so-called 'Jerusalem stone', *naarii* (Canaan 1933).

Female visitors, on the other hand, tend to congregate in the left-hand living room, which Ilfat believes is because of all the plants that obscure the bottom half of the large front and side windows. This is perhaps partly in order to secure the family's privacy, as well as to allow women who veil themselves, as Ilfat and Maryam do, to remove their scarves within the house, away from public view. The children's toys piled up in the corner of this room, as well as the presence of a television set, make this room feel like more of an everyday space. It feels more like a *diwan* than an English sitting room, as it has low seating platforms running around the edges of the room, with blankets and embroidered cushions laid over them. Ilfat and her husband formerly spent much of their time in this living room. Sadly, Isma'il passed away several years ago and the family now spend hardly any time in this room unless they have visitors. Rather, the everyday family spaces are towards the rear, where the kitchen and bathroom are, as well as the wide, central staircase leading to the upper floors.

The house is an important social space for Ilfat and Maryam, who tend to meet friends here or at other people's houses more often than going out: 'most of our socialising are in the homes, in the house […] So it is quite important, you know', said Ilfat. However, their family does not conform to many norms of Palestinian socialising. Ilfat, for instance, is decidedly uninterested in cooking:

> Ilfat: In the culture, you know, a lot of focus also around food. Even though our family is slightly eccentric in that sense [*laughs*]. We are not like the rest of the

> Palestinian families. The rest, as soon as you see someone, [you] cook. "Come on, eat!" You know, that's the automatic reaction straight away when you go to visit someone, like-
>
> Maryam: even cooking is a very social thing, like, in the villages [in Palestine], isn't it? 'Cause they'll all come, all the women will all contribute a bit and sit there together making all the food for everybody. Like, even that in itself is social. Like, even here we have, all the women are all in the kitchen
>
> Ilfat: sometimes they come and you know they just feel at home to do whatever they, sometimes they bring their own food because they know that I am not into the kitchen stuff. So they feel sorry for me [*laughs*] they take over or bring their food with them [*laughs*]. But when I go [to Palestine], like, because they are so- you know, the kitchen is so important, you'll find everyone in and out the kitchen, doing the things together.

Maryam locates the practices of both her family and other Palestinians within a wider context of kitchens and cooking as socially important sites and activities, although her memories of communal cooking practices in Palestinian villages gloss over potential power relations among women, within family and across local society. Indeed, researchers have explored the social functions of different kinds of kitchen-spaces, as centres of political activism and community life (Schroeder 2006), as semi-public arenas of female networking and scenes of intricate social and familial hierarchies (Christie 2006; Robson 2006). Although Ilfat appears to have freely relinquished her kitchen to guests, her children and son-in-law, some politics of access are still at work in her self-inflicted banishment. Also, when Ilfat's friends pay casual visits they have a tendency to sit on the stairs outside the kitchen which suggests a desire to remain in touch with what is going on in the kitchen without actively participating. Furthermore, sitting in the wide and open stair-well allows Ilfat to be in touch with people on the floors above, as well as with anyone arriving either through the main front door or, more frequently, the back door. Just as in the courtyard houses discussed earlier, this spot on the stairs outside the kitchen is connected with what is going on in all other parts of the house: 'it's the centre', says Ilfat.

Another of the family's self-identified oddities is that they do not always perform their social duties:

> Maryam: There's sort of certain things, if you're part of an Arab community, that's expected of you. Like you'll have to, you know, go and visit so and so at Eid, and so and so on [*inaudible*]. Like, I think we're sort of a bit detached from all that aspect of it, aren't we?

Ilfat: mm.

Maryam: 'Cause we don't really do any of the duties. Like, you know when people would invite this person because-

Ilfat: because they came and visited their daughter-in-law. Or some-, you know, somebody say from Jordan comes to visit someone and normally, culturally, everybody inside the family come for a meal or-, you know, and we are a bit- because of my lack of interest in the kitchen I invite people less [*laughs*].

Some social duties, however, are unavoidable. For example, Maryam and Ilfat explained that it is traditional to visit a couple two months after their wedding to congratulate them again and to bring gifts. This gathering happened to be occurring on the day of our second interview in the evening but, fortunately for Ilfat, her new son-in-law had been toiling in the kitchen all afternoon and their imminent guests would therefore not go hungry. Ilfat makes no apologies for being uninterested in cooking, rather she delights in the fact that her friends will often make food when they come round because they know that she will not. This 'open kitchen' attitude is part of a more general openness about their house. Several of Ilfat's closest friends and neighbours have keys to the house (and she theirs) so that they can look after the house while the family are away, or so that they can come round at any time:

Ilfat: Ruma has a key, she just comes any time and another, Meredith has a key as well

Maryam: oh yeah?

Ilfat: some other people- and Pamela, when we went to Jordan-

Maryam: oh they have a key, too?! [*laughter*] […] I think if we ever move we'll have to be careful and collect all the keys back from random people.

Ilfat sees this openness simply as part of Palestinian culture: 'Culturally, you know, I think this is how people are. You've been to Palestine and you know how it is: people are much more open to, you know [*pause*] lots of socialising, yeah'. She reminds me of one landlady she had in Jordan who fed and looked after Ilfat and Isma'il as if they were her own children:

This kind of thing you miss here, you know. So we try to create. I mean, like, within small community because it's not particularly English culture to do that, so we try to create it. If there is a problem with someone like, when we had the crisis [with Isma'il], everybody came, they cook, they bring you food. And when I wasn't well for- many years ago, many people used to come and do the cooking or the cleaning and the ironing. So, that kind of support, we try to create it.

Despite the atmosphere of hospitality and its everyday open-ness, Ilfat and Maryam's house is a more private space than it seems, as I will demonstrate in the next chapter. For now, however, it is simply important to note the more harmonious interrelationship between house and family here, compared with the struggles of Wadad and Tawfiq. Ilfat and Maryam's house differs not only in its local context and architecture, but in the social life practised within it and the role of the kitchen in those practices. Overall it seems to coincide well with their social and familial needs and desires, with no need to alter its form or interior layout. In other words, the architecture of *this* British house and the life of *this* Palestinian family are synchronised.

Both this story and that of Wadad and Tawfiq earlier, resonate in various ways with the practices and desires of other participants vis-à-vis hospitality. Ilyas and Nawal, for example, enjoyed a similar kind of supportive community centred on their house through their relationship with just one other family. This was when they lived in Sheffield, before they moved to their current house in the southeast of England, and the families became close after the men met at work. Alifa, the eldest daughter, explained all the connections:

> My dad is best friends with the father and my mum is best friends with the mother and Liana is best friends with the daughter and Mai's best friends with the son. So yeah it's quite close. And they lived next door to us. Not next door, I mean, but like two minutes walk or something.

The women in particular would see one another every day and would do almost everything together, including cooking, cleaning and looking after the children. The families were so close that when Ilyas and Nawal had an argument, Ilyas would call and ask his friend's wife to come over and comfort her. Likewise, Nawal's friend would call for Ilyas to talk to her husband when they themselves had argued. Their middle daughter, Liana, summed it up in one sentence: 'We're so close that we just walk into each other's house and just open the fridge'.

This level of intimacy is not for everyone, although there were some who desired it greatly but were not able to achieve it. Fu'ad, for example, felt that hospitality was the greatest thing missing from his current house in the West Midlands. He and his wife, Emily, moved to this suburban, semi-detached house in 2003 when he retired.

They chose the area mainly because it was close to Emily's sister and so they did not have any local friends when they arrived. Most of their friends are scattered all over the country, since Fu'ad's work as a minister had kept them moving house every few years. He very much misses being in the vicinity of lots of friends and family, especially now that he has retired and has more time on his hands. Fu'ad has fond memories from his childhood in Nazareth, where his family's house was always very busy, especially at Christmas and New Year. He also enjoyed taking Emily to see three different sets of relatives all on the same day just after they became engaged and would like to rekindle these Arab traditions of visiting and hospitality, which he says are 'ingrained' in him by his 'Eastern heritage' and which are a fundamental part of what, for him, makes 'home'. However, Fu'ad does not find it easy to make and receive visitors as much as he would like because people are very busy and so he mostly meets people outside the house, which he feels does not produce relationships of the same closeness.

The Al Rimawis, too, seemed to struggle with the different practices of visiting that come with life in Britain. As a child in Palestine, Faruq recalled his family having visitors every week, if not every day. In Britain, however, it takes more organisation to make or receive visitors, especially as they socialise a lot as a family and with other families, and so visits only occur once every few months: 'And that make our life really, relatively hard'. Noura added that during important times of year, such as Ramadan and Eid, they might have guests or be out visiting friends almost every night of the week, but at other times of year the house is more private:

> I think that's very much linked to the way life is here. You go to work. You come home at six, seven. There isn't as much time. Whereas, for example, in the Middle East you'll have, you know, for example, you can have your cousin come round or your aunt come round. […] I know when I was in my grandma's house you'd just have somebody knocking on your door and you're like "I'm not expecting anyone" but you don't necessarily expect people. People just come. If you're there, you're there.

Noura acknowledges that this is partly due to the fact that many of her relatives in Jordan live very close to one another, if not next-door. This is something I will discuss in more depth in the next chapter. Generally speaking, however, she and her father agreed that there was a more 'easy come, easy go' attitude towards visiting in Arab culture. Noura also noted that it is more common in Britain to go out rather than meet people at home, as do her cousins in Jordan. That said, Zaki's attachment to their

current house was bound up with it being his 'place in the world', where his friends can always find him 'I've got most of my memories here […] I've lived longest in this house and everybody knows this is my house and they can, like, if anyone wants me, he can come over'.

What I have demonstrated in this section is that houses have an important role to play in participants' social lives, a role which they may or may not fulfil. As I have shown, this can depend on architectural design and physical location, but also on the demands of hospitality being made and the maintenance of close and informal friendships, as well as the rhythms of busy working and family lives in Britain. This variable compatibility of people, practices and spaces influences the relationships between participants and their houses, leading some to feel 'at home' in their house, while others struggle.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored participants' experiences of and ideas about the houses in which they have lived and the practices that bring these spaces to life in particular ways. It has engaged with the relationships and practices that make domestic space meaningful; the intersections between domestic practices and material objects in the (re)production and exhibition of individual and familial identities; and the variably harmonious interrelationships between house, family and wider social worlds. In the process, I have demonstrated that house as a site of diasporic dwelling must be considered in relation to personal and cultural experiences, expectations and desires about domestic space and as situated within wider social lives. Houses are meaningful because of the places and memories they evoke, the significant objects they contain, protect and display, the relationships played out within them, and the social lives led in and around them. Migration introduces particular tensions into these processes of domestic dwelling insofar as these mechanisms by which houses accumulate meaning may be spread over large distances and recollections of places and people elsewhere may sit uneasily with the immediacies of diasporic life.

Thinking in this way about dwelling problematises the relationships between house, home and identity discussed in chapter two, as it demonstrates the influences of generation, gender and migration history. For those whose childhoods were fractured

by *al Nakba*, feeling 'at home' in a diasporic house may constitute a betrayal of a larger homeland that is the focus of a simultaneously personal and political identity. However, for their children, whose lives have been characterised by mobility and cultural difference, a sense of home may be split between places without compromising loyalty to house or homeland. From a gendered perspective, a man with a functional attitude towards cooking, who has already adapted his domestic environment to emulate the open spaces of his childhood home, may feel no animosity for his suburban semi-detached house (although no great affiliation either), while his wife rails against the same ill-organised spaces for inhibiting her achievement of the domestic family life and social practices with which she identifies. Finally, a woman who was not displaced by *al Nakba* may rely on the contents of her handbag rather than her house to provide a sense of diasporic home, while one who has lived in fourteen houses in four different countries could only find peace with her current house once it was put to work for Palestine.

By addressing participants' very different feelings towards their houses and the range of ways in which they cultivate a sense of home within domestic space, this chapter adds to debates around house and home, particularly the ongoing need to interrogate and complicate this apparently straight-forward relationship. In exploring both men's and women's perspectives, this chapter also contributes to debates about gender in relation to house and home, especially the different ways in which men value and engage with domestic space (Varley and Blasco 2001). The next chapter continues to explore the significance of domestic space but takes this discussion further by focusing specifically on family relatedness. Having argued here for an understanding of domestic spaces within their wider personal, familial and social worlds, the next chapter specifically explores the meaning of family both in relation to domestic spaces and across diasporic geographies.

5 GEOGRAPHIES OF PALESTINIAN FAMILIES

This chapter explores the varied and complex geographies of participants' families and how people negotiate these geographies through everyday family practices. The purpose of this chapter is to explore the changing meanings and geographies of participants' families across distances, as well as the spaces and practices through which participants produce and maintain feelings of relatedness in a diasporic context. In doing so, I take family as both an agent of movement and displacement for diasporic populations, as well as a mode of belonging that is 'lived through distance, nostalgia and memory' (Fortier 2000, 62). My argument in this chapter is that migration has precipitated a re-imagination of family and a reworking of family relationships over distance, but that these new formations remain tied to conventional ideas of 'proper family' as a spatially and temporally situated unit. Drawing upon the geographies of familial closeness and distance discussed in chapter two, I extend these debates by exploring how relatedness intersects with different spatialities of home; how feelings about scattered family are bound up with ideals of homeland belonging; and how domestic spaces and practices feature ambivalently in ideals and experiences of family.

Exploring the meanings of family in this way is crucial for understanding how Palestinians living in Britain may or may not forge a place for themselves within a collectivity, be it a family, community, nation, religion or culture. However, these investigations must be made without imposing European models of descent onto Arab notions of 'kin' and 'family', which in Palestine have long and complicated social histories (Escribano 1987; Feghali 1997). Family is an enduring social institution in many Arab countries and the particular centrality of the family among Palestinians has led to descriptions of them as a 'kinship culture'. Indeed, the structure and function of families have for centuries provided economic and social security for Palestinians, and sometimes also political representation (Ata 1986; Hopkins and Ibrahim 1997). Immediately after 1948, however, the 'informal fundamental apparatus' of the family was said to have become 'the center and the survival core' of Palestinian society in the

absence of all other formal institutions of protection (Ghabra 1987, 17) As Taraki (2006b) points out, however, wide-ranging sociological surveys of family such as that by Ibrahim Ata (1986) obscure differences associated with location and community, as well as more subtle variations in how individual households (and individuals within those households) function within wider families. Moreover, Taraki argues that the perceived post-1948 'endurance' of Palestinian families, particularly in the face of Israeli occupation and the struggles of first and second *intifada*, is often romanticised and thus fails to address the material and psychological practices through which families and their members are (un)able to 'cope' under difficult conditions.

This chapter focuses on two main things: the functioning of individual families over various distances and the importance of domestic practices in producing both family and social belonging. As such, this chapter engages with various aspects of my research questions, particularly how practices and relationships of family are influenced by wider patterns of migration and how maintaining these practices and relationships contributes to a sense of home. Moreover, this chapter explores the implications of these new family geographies for collective Palestinian identities by examining how cultures of family are challenged, manipulated and reinforced among Palestinians in Britain and how individual ideas and practices of family overlap or diverge across social networks. In doing so, this chapter is concerned with the intersection of the relationships and geographies of family, and the implications of this for productions of home, community and identity.

The chapter is organised in four parts. The first two concern the 'where' and 'when' of family. I begin by tracing the new geographies that have taken shape in participants' families over the past twenty to sixty years, considering in detail the migration histories of Jameel Nuweihad and the Haniyyahs while connecting with other participants' experiences of family scattering, clustering and staying put. Building on this, I then explore the ways in which notions of 'family' have multiplied, such that large Arab family life is seen as something that happens elsewhere in both time and space, and all that remains in the here and now is an emotionally impoverished, physically emaciated, nuclear version of that 'proper', extended and proximate family.

The remaining two sections develop these issues in different but interrelated ways. Firstly, I examine how family belonging is sustained through particular strategies

of intimacy and relatedness across these new family geographies. Drawing upon literature around communication practices of transnational and diasporic migrants, the dynamics of family belonging over distances and cultures of relatedness in popular genealogy (Baldassar 2008; Nash 2003; Panagakos and Horst 2006; Skrbiš et al 2007; Skrbiš 2008; Wilding 2006), I discuss the various communication technologies employed by participants to 'keep in touch' and their implications for notions of connectedness among family in different places. I also examine Tayyib's material approach to dispersed family relatedness by keeping houses in several countries at once, in a manner similar to the ongoing functions of the *diwan* in some Palestinian families. I then investigate more specific practices of making and receiving visits from family and some participants' ambivalence about domestic life in a large, proximate Arab 'family without borders', opening up arguments about the politics of nature and culture in the production of family (Nash 2005). In the final section I turn to cultures of family and identity in the context of participants' British houses. Drawing on some intimate moments in family life and strategies of raising children, I investigate the significance of domestic space, practices and objects in the cultivation of a particular kind of family life and identity in Britain. In particular, I focus on *al beit* as a key site of language teaching and learning which opens up modes of familial, cultural and social relatedness, belonging and identity for those growing up in diaspora.

New family geographies

By way of opening up the themes of family relationships over distance and family geographies of Palestine to be explored in this chapter, I wish to introduce the migration histories of two more participants and their families. Concentrating first on Jameel Nuweihad and then on the Haniyyah family, I draw out the complexities of how identity and belonging relate to place on a range of scales and the bitter-sweet experiences of life as part of a scattered family. I then connect these accounts to the imaginative geographies of family among other participants, which introduces multiple notions of family located in different time-spaces.

The routes of a Mediterranean identity

Jameel Nuweihad came to Britain in the 1970s for largely professional reasons. Having trained as an architect in the United States and worked there for several years, Jameel wanted to be physically closer to the European architecture he had studied and that had influenced him. For him, London was a scene of his architectural interests as well as a base from which to explore the architectures of continental Europe. London was also intended to be the first leg of Jameel's return journey to his roots in the Mediterranean; a journey which soon changed direction once he met his wife, Helene, who is originally from Germany, and they went on to have a daughter, Layla. Jameel is from a Catholic family who until 1948 lived near Al Ramle, just to the south of what is now Ben-Gurion Airport. Due to heavy fighting around Al Ramle near the time of his birth in the early 1940s, Jameel's mother chose not have her son there but to return to her home town of Bethlehem to give birth, where Jameel spent the first few weeks of his life in the care of nuns. This 'accident of history' surrounding his birth took on what seemed to him to be unnecessary significance during a brief spell in a London hospital. He had been taken very seriously ill and had almost died but miraculously pulled through. As he lay recovering from this ordeal, the hospital chaplain visited him and happened to ask where he was from. When Jameel replied that he had been born in Bethlehem, the priest said, 'Oh, from Our Lord's place?' After a confused pause, Jameel casually replied 'oh yeah'. News of his illustrious origins travelled quickly and the next day he was visited by half a dozen nuns:

> "My son! my son! we hear that you are [from Bethlehem]!" Like this, you know, and all this glorification of my existence. And I was fascinated, it was the first time it happened to me. So what?! You know, I just happened to be born there.

Jameel decided to play on what he saw as their misguided adulation by asking 'so what do I get from you guys? You know, daily prayers or something like this?' Missing the joke, the nuns claimed that it was their prayers that had brought him back from the brink of death. 'No, thank God to that doctor upstairs', he replied. Once they had left, the other men on the ward began teasing Jameel about his draw on these holy women: '"How come you have nuns and we don't have any?" [they said]. I said, "well, you have to be born in Bethlehem, you know." So from there on I take it as a joke in a way'. For Jameel, this story exposes the irrelevance of notions of belonging to a particular place,

partly because all his siblings were born in Al Ramle and his birth in Bethlehem was simply an aberration of their family history brought about by the political situation at the time. Moreover, Jameel finds the holiness he acquired in the imagined link between himself and Jesus Christ through the town of Bethlehem ridiculous. For Jameel, personal and familial belonging operates on much larger scales than this, namely the scale of the state of Ohio, the nation-state of Palestine and the Eastern Mediterranean.

In 1948 Jameel's family fled the fighting in Palestine and arrived in Beirut where the company Jameel's father worked for had a branch. This allowed them to avoid registering as refugees, which was important to Jameel's father, who wanted his children to go through life as 'citizens, *people* […] Palestinian *people*'. Jameel grew up in Beirut but left in the 1960s to study architecture in the United States. Over the course of the nine years he spent there, the rest of the family gradually congregated in this part of the world:

> [My siblings'] professions were engineers and they- they decided and I think, although we went to college and universities in different states, uh close to each other, we ended up in Ohio, because the eldest brother was in Ohio […] we follow him, we stay nearby or- like this, and then the parents came, my sister came, my other brother from Australia came. Like this, you know, *drrrrr* just like a bee-hive, you know. *Whoooit*, the queen is there, you go there, you stay there.

Most of the Nuweihad family continue to live in Ohio, although Jameel and his brother, Hasan, have moved to the UK. Like Jameel, Hasan was drawn to Britain for professional reasons but he also moved to be close to their parents while they still lived in Lebanon, since it was his responsibility as the eldest son to take care of them should anything happen. Although their parents eventually moved to the States, where they later passed away, Hasan met his wife in Britain and ended up staying. Jameel believes that this transatlantic geography has precipitated differences within the family with respect to Palestine, mainly as a result of the contrasting political and media environments on either side of the ocean:

> Some of my family have resigned to the fact, yeah, that there is Israel. We lost our land and I'm trying to revive that with them and when they come here once in a while on occasions we- we, you know, expose the whole damn tragedy, you know, as- as something we- we live with and we should not forget, yeah […] They want to go on liv- they want to live. They don't- they don't have time to hassle, you know, like this and I feel totally different. I want to live as well but I think, as I said before, the connection also with England, yeah, because it was the root of this problem […]

> While in America they're sheltered by the media that, you know, there is no problem, you know: Israel is a fact and it goes on and America supports it and we pay taxes and all this. It's a one-sided thing. While here there's a constant, you know, evolution of the case and that makes a big difference. So we, you know, I'm always boiling, my brother's always boiling. We go to lectures, we go to debates, we are proactive.

The relatively diverse debates about the Middle East in the British press, parliament and activist circles, not to mention the historic involvement of Britain in Zionist colonisation, has kept the issue of Palestine current for Jameel and Hasan and sets them apart from their US family, who are largely insulated by uncritical media and a conservative political atmosphere. Indeed, Jameel has not been to visit his family for ten years, mainly because he refused to enter the US between 2001 and 2009 while George Bush Jr. was in office. With President Obama now installed in the White House, Jameel was planning to attend a family get-together in Ohio in summer 2009 and intended to address what he sees as his family's political apathy by circulating a photograph of them taken sixty years ago standing in front of their rented house in Beirut. He discovered the photograph in his father's archives after he passed away and was taking it to the States in order to make sense of it as well as to 'make sense out of the get-together':

> It was taken in forty-nine and uh so we, I don't know the exact date of it but it doesn't matter. It looks like spring time, in front of the house with jasmine plants all around and all this stuff. So we'll have a get-together, a big one […] sixty-one years after the *Nakba* but sixty years after that photograph.

Family photographs are an image of family togetherness and a testament to ongoing connectedness when its members no longer live together (Rose 2003). Jameel wants to take this further by encouraging connectedness through a particular historical event: placing this family photograph into the wider narrative context of Palestinian displacement, Jameel hopes that decoding the photograph will recentre the *Nakba* in his family's lives, as the reason that they have special 'get-togethers' at all and why these take place in Ohio and not Al Ramle. 'Why was the photograph taken in the first place?' he planned to ask, 'and why was it taken there and not in Palestine? I'm sure they all know but they- they had for- they'd prefer not to debate it too much, to confront it'. What he would like his family to confront is the 'meta-photographic text' (Hirsch 1997, 8), that is both the ongoing immediacy of the *Nakba* in their lives and the

larger political history encoded in the photograph through the house, the family and the location. In the photograph, the backdrop of their rented Beirut house in 1949 references a larger background of expulsion from historic Palestine the previous year, three-quarters of which now constituted the state of Israel, and expulsion from their own house, which would have been destroyed or seized by the new Israelis. The immediate family unit of Jameel's parents, himself and his brothers and sister are the only part of Palestine that remains intact in this photograph. As such, this photographic trace of the family's 'irrecoverable past' in Lebanon echoes the irrecoverable life in Palestine they left behind.

There is a mythology and idealism to family photographs: they constitute "an image to live up to, an image shaping the desire of the individual living in a social group" (Hirsch 1997, 8). For Jameel, what is at stake is the immediacy of expulsion as it was felt by his parents on the day this photograph was taken in 1949 and as it continues to be felt by himself and his brother sixty years later. As such, in Jameel's eyes, the 'proper' viewing of this photograph does not simply involve looking, it involves the registering of political *effects* within the viewer (see Barthes 1981). While he understands that after so many years people can become tired and lose hope, 'that's what the other side hopes that you do' and so it must be resisted. Rather, Jameel hopes that the photograph and some realisation about what it means will stir his family to grassroots political action, such as writing to their Senators about Palestine: 'don't look at the president and pray that he will do something, you know. Start doing something from the bottom up, you know'.

Jameel has been politically engaged in this way since his student days in New York, although his activism was subject to a several-year hiatus after he moved to the UK. This was partly because Jameel had become fatigued publicising Palestinian issues in a city with such a strong Zionist community as New York, but also because when he arrived in the UK 'architecture really took over my thinking. I forgot the politics'. It was at this point that he began considering the meaning of 'survival in the environment', from which he had become alienated through the luxuries of city life, 'and I decided, maybe my roots are in the desert'. Jameel promptly took a leave of absence from his new job in London and headed for the Algerian Sahara in the hope of spending time with the Tuareg people of the Ahaggar mountains. He describes it as 'the

most amazing experience of my life', which completely altered his perceptions of 'civilisation' but left his romanticised view of the Tuareg's gruelling existence intact:

> It's life really. It's life at its hardest but most beautiful. Untouched by humanity, untouched by the spoils of modernity […] The desert was the beginning, yeah, and the purity of the desert, the humanity of the desert hit me very hard.

Upon returning to London he recalls 'hiding' in his flat for three months, writing diaries of his experiences and avoiding the pressures of metropolitan life such as public transport and paid employment. His employers were extremely accommodating, even when he announced 'I cannot see myself doing architecture anymore', that is, architecture in the sense of 'sitting down at a desk talking to clients and this confined interpretation of architecture […] in the desert I would not have had to meet clients and-, you know. Just- just build, you know, instinct, instinctive building'. This fantasy inspired Jameel to return to his architectural roots, eschewing the mundane work of 'detailing and meeting clients on site and builders and all this stuff' in favour of the graphics, photography and general design of the company's promotional brochures. He only returned to the practicalities of architecture after a once-in-a-lifetime commission in which he was offered complete artistic and financial control over a project in Saudi Arabia on the understanding that it would be completed within a year. Although he was once again returning to the desert, he had no sense of returning to his 'roots' as he had in Algeria because he had no 'affinity' with the oil-rich Saudi classes. Nevertheless, the experience brought him back to architecture, 'really hardcore architecture'. This return to his professional senses also brought him back to his political senses, as it was around this time that the Lebanese civil war was tearing up his 'adopted country', a war in which the leaders of his first country, Palestine, were implicated:

> And that brought me back: "why is this-? why is that place-? what's-?" And of course, civil war there started with the Palestinians in Lebanon, the refugees, Arafat, all this stuff. So [I thought] "ah!"

What all of this demonstrates is that family, place, politics and architecture are all interconnected within Jameel's sense of himself and his identity, which he describes as 'Eastern Mediterranean'. I have already discussed the influence of this identity on his architecture and psychology of domestic space in the previous chapter but it is its

influence on Jameel's personal sense of belonging that is important here, which for him is based on cultural relatedness:

> [Identity is] to relate something that you like and you love. To relate to something that has been part of your upbringing, um. And it happens to be made up of people, yes, it happens to be made up of a cultural affinity, it happens to be made up of the physical surroundings that you grew up with. It happens to be also the language, although that becomes less and less, and it happens to be the geography and the geography is so crucial in my case: Palestine, Lebanon, the Orient, where civilisations were born, massive civilisations, the greatest civilisations were born. All the others become by-product. America is only two hundred and thirty years old, big deal. It doesn't mean anything too much to me. It doesn't mean very much to me. […] But I feel like when you look at the orient and you look in the Middle East, as such, forget about the politics for the moment, there's so much knowledge, there's so much history, there is so many- you know, you are almost embedded in it, you are stuck with it. You cannot and- you cannot and you don't want to get rid of it. And that's identity. When I think- when I talk in a simplistic manner to somebody, I'm talking from that identity: the emotions and the love and the passion and the craziness, the hospitality. It's Mediterranean identity. Not west Mediterranean but east Mediterranean, yeah? The Lebanon, the Phoenicians and the Semites and all of that was embedded in us, beyond that I don't know how to explain it. I think it's, and I think although my parents were not so nationalistic yeah, they showed us all these humanistic characteristics of people, you know, generosity, the love, the family, the roots, being part of a place without saying '*rar rar rar rar rar* you are Christian and you are-!' without saying these things, yeah, so you belong somewhere in life. You must. You can travel but you always come back. And believe me if I didn't have those roots I would be a nomad, I would be travelling, meaning a cultural nomad, you know, I'd be all over, floating.

These senses of incontrovertible 'roots' in the Eastern Mediterranean, born out of relationships among family and community, within a cultural and physical environment, speaking common languages and sharing in the rich intellectual history of a region, are not the antithesis of physical travel but the foundations of it. It is this ontological grounding that has enabled Jameel to leave Palestine, to grow up in Lebanon, to develop architecturally in various cities and deserts, and to connect with his politically (in)different family without losing his own place in the world (see Clifford 1997; Gilroy 1997): 'Despite these movements, yeah, you always go back to the roots. I guess that's somehow the answer to your question, about identity, there's something ticking always inside all of us'. Rejecting attempts by others to simplistically root him by his birth in Bethlehem, Jameel has forged much more complex senses of personal, intellectual, familial, cultural and political belonging that operates *with* its intricate geography across cities, states, oceans and deserts, and encompasses a sense of past

'Oriental' achievements and future Palestinian goals. In terms of family, this intricate geography is still a relatively coherent one, covering Lebanon, the US and the UK, and this may also have contributed to Jameel's sense of self. For Ilyas Haniyyah and Nawal Jabra, however, expulsion from Palestine and later from Kuwait has precipitated a more finely-grained scattering of family members throughout the world, which has had implications for personal and cultural identity, as well as for the notion of family itself.

'Family was taken from us'

Ilyas and Nawal are both from families based on the Mediterranean coast, just north of Gaza. Nawal's family are from the village of Al Jora, from which they were forced to flee in 1948 to Kuwait, where Nawal was later born. Despite living in Kuwait for decades, by 1990 most of the family still carried Egyptian travel documents because the state had only granted them residency not citizenship, which put them and all Palestinians in Kuwait in an extremely vulnerable position when Iraq invaded (Van Hear 1998). Fortunately, Nawal's mother and one of Nawal's sisters carried Jordanian passports, the former for reasons not explained to me and the latter because her husband had a Jordanian passport. Also, Nawal's father was working in Jordan at the time of the Gulf War but still on Egyptian travel documents and so, in order for him to remain in Jordan and in order to get the rest of the family out of Kuwait, they needed Jordanian passports. Here they had to rely on the financial resources of Nawal's uncle in one of the Gulf States, who paid a deposit of one million US dollars to the Jordanian government to obtain four passports for Nawal's father, her two brothers and one remaining sister. Nawal herself was already living in Britain at this time, having married Ilyas in 1984. Nawal's father passed away several years ago but her mother and three of her siblings continue to live in Jordan, with her remaining brother living in Kuwait.

Ilyas's family are from the same area of Palestine as Nawal's family, although they were spread between Al Jora and the nearby town of Al Majdal. In 1948 the family fled to relatives in Gaza, where his father was involved in an educational project for refugees. In the mid-1950s, when Ilyas was only a few days old, the family moved to Kuwait in order for his father to complete a university diploma and take up a job as a teacher. Ilyas first came to Britain in the 1970s to do his A-levels and an undergraduate

degree, before returning to Kuwait to work. After he and Nawal married, they moved to Britain with their baby daughter, Alifa, so that Ilyas could undertake a Masters and a PhD. Their two other daughters, Liana and Mai, were both born in England. In July 1990, Ilyas's sister and brother and his brother's wife and children came to Britain for a short holiday. However, when Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait at the beginning of August they became stranded and have remained here ever since. Ilyas's parents and youngest brother managed to remain in Kuwait for the duration of the Gulf War but joined Ilyas in Britain once it was over, choosing a town in the southwest of England to be close to Ilyas and Nawal. His remaining siblings (three sisters and one brother) were already in the US or able to flee to the US at the time of the Gulf War, sometimes through marriage or through possession of a green card affording them permanent residency in the States.

Although some have relocated again in the years since the Gulf War, many have remained where they ended up, such that Ilyas's and Nawal's families are now spread across the US, the UK, Jordan, Kuwait and other parts of the Arab world. Having only ever experienced family life in Kuwait rather than in Palestine, Ilyas sees this scattered geography as having its benefits:

> I think we are happier now because with our status as British citizens and as American citizens – all of us [are] either American citizens or British, yeah – we are able to go to visit. And before when we were in Kuwait, although my uncles for example were in Saudi Arabia but it was very difficult with travel documents, Egyptian travel documents that we had, to go and visit relatives, if you know what I mean. So from family point of view, although we have the Atlantic now between us, but at least we can actually- I can go to United States [and] they can come.

Thus although family members were physically closer to one another prior to 1990 when they were all in the Arab world, it was more difficult to visit one another because of their lack of any citizenship. With British and American passports, however, they are not only free to visit family elsewhere in the world but also secure in their capacity to return in the event of another catastrophe. For Ilyas and Nawal's daughters, however, this ability to travel does not ameliorate the impossibility of having the nine members of Ilyas's family and the six members of Nawal's (plus their children, their children's spouses and grandchildren) together in one place:

> Alifa: I do find it sad though that, you know, [*inaudible*], you know, one bedroom and now they're never going to all [*inaudible*]. You know, people come over but you're never going to get seven of them
>
> Mai: exactly, I was-
>
> Alifa: in one country let alone, you know, one room
>
> Mai: I was just saying actually the other day, my dream has always been that I'd be living [with] all, you know, six of my uncles and aunties, my dad's, and all my cousins and my grandparents in one house or in one country, so that we could all be united, you know
>
> Joanna: 'cause that never happens
>
> Alifa: absolutely
>
> Mai: it never ever happens
>
> Alifa: you'd never be able to get all the people together.

The only time Alifa, Liana and Mai get to spend time with their family as a group is when they make trips to the Middle East, which Alifa believes has distorted their perceptions of family:

> I think family to Palestinians is a lot more- it's I think more important, like, compared to my English friends and how, you know, they have cousins in England who they could see quite easily and they see them just at Christmas. And to us I think it always was quite a big deal, wasn't it, Mai? Maybe because we didn't have our relatives it always- I think relatives were always something really magical for us.

Ilyas emphasised that this desire to keep in close touch with more 'distant' relatives, such as aunts, uncles and cousins, was 'an Arabic thing' and particularly a Palestinian thing:

> Because if you lose your land and if you lose your home, then what is left is your people. So you keep touch with your own people and, of course, the nearer you keep- you might as well keep in touch with your immediate family, then the extended family, then those who are attached to that, rather than just friends. Of course, friends as well but the family always comes first, always comes first.

Liana expressed the same sentiment later on in our discussion, when I asked more specifically about the links between Palestinian identity and family:

> Liana: when you don't have a country, your land, your home anymore, but you still have your family, so you want to hold on even more. And I think, you know, with your identity, because sometimes in the place you have your identity but when that's taken away you know you use what's around you to get the Arabic culture [*inaudible*]

> Nawal: but the problem is- but the problem is that all the Palestinians, we are never all together in one place, that's what makes us closer because really-
>
> Alifa: you feel that it was taken from you, family was taken from us
>
> Nawal: yeah.

Alifa pointed out that many other Palestinians are not able to travel and visit family in the way that they do: 'you see on TV people who meet up with their children, their brothers and sisters, that they've been separated for like- somebody's in Lebanon and someone stayed in Palestine, you know, they've never seen each other'. One of Nawal's uncles had a daughter in Gaza and had never seen her children, his grandchildren, until Israel's three-week assault in the winter of 2008-2009 when the Egyptian border was briefly opened and he managed to find her in the chaos. 'We saw them on Al Jazeera,' said Nawal, 'I was really- just to see my uncle, oh!, with his daughter and her- and grandchildren. Amazing'. Any discussion of the different degrees of separation among Palestinian families and their implications should also include those who have not been separated at all, such as the family of Ibrahim 'Ali Taha, Alifa's husband, who are from and continue to live in the village of Tira, which is now part of Israel. For Alifa, their attitudes towards family could not be more different:

> Alifa: I mean, I compare to my husband's family, and I don't know if it's just they've got different personalities, maybe like my dad's family and my mum's family are quite emotional, but I do feel they were all – do you feel that? – laid back about family
>
> Liana: yeah
>
> Alifa: they're more laid back about it because they've always had- family's more, it can be more of a nuisance to them, you know. But whereas we've never had family has been a nuisance because we've never been- you know, I mean, you get to meet up on such special occasions it's only positive.

Alifa almost envies her husband's laid-back attitude towards family and his ability to sometimes find his family 'a nuisance' because it means that they are involved enough in one another's lives that each encounter is not treated as a sacred, rarefied experience. Ibrahim grew up in the house next door to his uncle and within a few minutes' walk from numerous other aunts and uncles. To them, living fifteen or twenty minutes away is considered 'far'. 'We never really had that' said Alifa

> I mean, 'cause our grandparents [*inaudible*] and our uncles and aunties, it was really quite magical wasn't it? I think the reality is not, like, you know, it's not all love and

> absolutely amazing but if you do live near them there are problems and things but to us it always means quite a lot.

Thus, as Nawal said earlier, the problem may be that Palestinian families are never all together in one place but 'that's what makes us closer'; it adds a bitter-sweet 'magic' to family relationships that is more noticeable in diasporic family life than in the mundane 'reality' of proximate family life. As Liana said, however, this added importance comes not just from the physical separation of family but from the loss of other commonly-held coordinates of identity, such as home, land and country. When these usual places of identity are not available other modes of identity are revealed, such as the practices of Arabic family culture, as discussed in the previous chapter. For Alifa, however, this Arabic family life is always an approximation of the 'true' Arabic family life taking place in a spatial and temporal 'elsewhere'. In other words, 'family' in the desired sense is the life Alifa's grandparents had in Kuwait before the Gulf War, with everyone in the same house or in close proximity. It is also the life of her husband's childhood and her own future, when she and Ibrahim eventually move to Tira; a move that will take her away from her own parents and sisters in Britain.

Elsewhere

These imaginaries of Arabic family as existing in a spatial and temporal 'elsewhere' were shared by some other participants and I will explore these thoughts more fully in this section as they raise questions about how the very meaning of 'family' is shifting and contested in a diasporic context. As the Haniyyah family's discussion suggests, notions of family are multiplying, such that large Arab family life is seen as something that happens elsewhere in both time and space, and all that remains in the here and now is an impoverished nuclear version of 'proper' family. These views are based on perceived binary oppositions between 'Arab' and 'British' cultures and models of family, which efface social and geographical complexities (Nagel 2001; Duncan and Smith 2002):

> Tawfiq: there is no family life. We are only, like, four people in the house, there's no family attachment, you know, in England at the moment. But it's important for us, this is something we miss. And this is the *Nakba*, the real *Nakba*. And people say the *Nakba* was [*inaudible*], the real *Nakba* is also being shattered [*sic*] around the world. And the Israelis, I reckon they understand this and they're trying to make their world always around it, you know. They understand that we have to return one day. If we

don't, our children [will]. If not our children, our grandchildren. But one day we shall return.

Joanna: so you don't feel that you have a family life?

Tawfiq: no. The only family is us, the four of us

Wadad: it's a huge difference

Tawfiq: small family. We have the, what do you call it, the atom or the-?

Joanna: nuclear

Tawfiq: nuclear of the family but we don't have the family as family, you know.

In a similar way, Faruq Al Rimawi located 'proper' family life in the 'proper' family house of his parents in Palestine prior to 1948. When discussing the contemporary clustering of his wife's family in Jordan, Faruq expanded on this multiplication of family through a clear distinction between that which happens 'there' and that which happens 'here' in Britain:

A family here is one unit. A family there is the whole big family. […] Sometimes I would say the family is the whole- my big family, ok, and sometimes I will just relate to my kids and my wife. So it depends on your question, how to answer that. But still, from my heart, my family is not only my wife and my kids. My family is my whole family: grandparents, cousins, aunties and their kids. That's all my family. Even my village or my city, is that also my big family there.

Here again, however, Faruq's ideas diverged from his daughter Noura's in a way that generated considerable tension between them. Having grown up in Britain with only her parents and siblings around her, Noura had an inverted sense of these kinds of family in which this nuclear 'version' came before the wider family:

Noura: My family is this simple unit: my mum, dad, brothers and sisters, that's sort of my close-knit family to me but it really stops there. You know, going in to further definitions- it's not something that I've thought about but, you know, if you said to me on the top of my head, you know, maybe I have fallen into the, you know, the four-point-two, you know, the British, you know, stereotypical family um- I have probably fallen into that, um but it's the people you grow with and the people that you carry on growing with 'til, 'til the end of days

Faruq: [if] you will not follow my way, you will disintegrate

[*pause*]

Noura: [*inaudible*] I'm not saying all-!

Faruq: I am telling you. Ok?

Attempting to defuse the situation, Noura quickly elaborated on the difference that generation makes to notions of family, and how wider family remains important but in a different way to their immediate family:

> Noura: I think probably with our generation we do feel- we do have that feeling [of belonging to a larger family], we don't necessarily define it and whereas maybe with our parents and my dad's generations it'd be something that's there, twenty-four-seven, no matter what. I think with us it's something that's sort of on an occasion, be it sad or happy, that, you know, my dad's definition of family sort of more kicks in. Um, I think my dad's definition of family definitely has a lot of advantages to it um and I do agree with it to an- sort of- no I do think his words are right, I don't disagree with him, but I think just my way's different. I'm not saying it's wrong or right, it's just different. It will have some disadvantages.
>
> Faruq: different because you are single. When you will be married you will feel more.
>
> Noura: probably, I think you know um that's definitely right because I have, when I was younger my parents would say things to me, I wouldn't appreciate it at all, I'd just think they were from a different- you could say they were aliens that didn't understand you, didn't have- didn't know what the real world was but then sort of having- especially with my youngest brother because there's such a big gap between us, and I sort of think what my parents used to say to me I'll sort of say to him. And I'll know in his head he'll think I'm an alien, who doesn't know what's going on in this world and that things have changed but no really they haven't, so I think it's something you understand when you grow up and when you are given this responsibility. So maybe it isn't sort of this concept of, you know, family isn't a concept of my dad's generation, maybe it's just what the situation teaches you. Fully agree with you there, dad.

What emerges most clearly from this exchange between Noura and Faruq is that the very notion of what or who constitutes family is dichotomising. Where in Faruq's experience there is only one 'definition' of family, for Noura there are two, which are separated in time and space. In one sense, her family are those who populate her everyday existence in Britain: her father, mother and siblings. In another (secondary) sense, however, her family are also the aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents she meets up with 'on an occasion' when she visits Jordan or Palestine. In their conversation, Noura attributes these competing definitions to generational differences between herself and her father, which have developed from the different contexts in which they grew up ('maybe it's just what the situation teaches you'), but then goes on to suggest intra-generational differences among siblings who are separated by more than a decade in age. For Faruq, however, this disagreement is less attributable to age or

generation than to life-stage: pre-marital and, by extension, pre-parenthood, and post-marital/parenthood.

In short, from both Noura and Faruq's perspectives, the 'where', 'when' and, indeed, 'what' of family is an outcome of migration, marital status and generational relationships between parents and children, and among siblings. Moreover, although Faruq and Noura disagree on their relative importance, they agree that multiple senses of family exist and are distributed across time and space. One's childhood experiences of family are crucial here, as Faruq knew what it meant to have extended family around 'twenty-four-seven', whereas nuclear family life is Noura's chief point of reference. As shown earlier, Mai Haniyyah lamented the loss of domestic intimacy within a large family and her sister, Alifa, was acutely aware of the consequences of this for their attitudes towards family; attitudes generated by their diasporic upbringing and quite different from those of her husband, who grew up next door to his uncle in Palestine-Israel. The meaning of family had evolved for Jameel Nuweihad as well, albeit in a slightly different way. For him, the apathy of his US-based siblings disrupts his ideals of a politically unified and mobilised family, which he imagines to be recorded in a sixty-year-old photograph and currently embodied only by himself and his brother.

All of this points towards the different modes of experiencing and imagining the 'feeling' of family among participants and also to the politics of *producing* a sense of family over distances. While in their hearts, participants may hold that 'family is family', the power of such kinship still relies on practices of relatedness among varyingly scattered family members. In the next section I address participants' performances of kinship by exploring how they cultivate a 'family feeling' over distances through practices of communication and visiting. In doing so, I consider the ways in which these performances both reproduce and challenge imaginaries of 'family elsewhere', and the specific role of houses in the production of family.

Strategies of intimacy and relatedness

Communication practices of transnational and diasporic migrants and the dynamics of family belonging over distances has been the subject of increasing interest in recent decades. This has been particularly so since the advent of the internet and Arturo Escobar's prescient article on the enormous possibilities of 'cyberculture' (1994). Just

over a decade later, the editors of a special edition of *Global Networks* recommended a 'return to cyberia', arguing that, although the internet has had a dynamic influence on communication patterns, scholars should situate this tool within the wider range of technologies employed by people according to their geographical location, social status, age, gender and so on (Panagakos and Horst 2006). Moreover, they called for more attention to the implications of different communication technologies for emotional relationships over distance, including feelings of co-presence, involvement and intimacy. These calls were taken up and extended by contributors to two special issues of the *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, which explored processes of belonging among migrants of different generations (Skrbiš et al 2007) and the emotional dynamics of family over long distances (Skrbiš 2008). Of particular relevance to my discussion in this part of the chapter was the authors' concern with the meaning of 'generation' itself, specifically, the over-emphasis on 'second-generation' migrants at the expense of relationships across migrants of different age-groups and of complexities within age-groups (Skrbiš et al 2007; see also Chamberlain 1995). As Victoria Mason (2007) has demonstrated, definitions of 'generation' can be even more specific to the cultural and political contexts of particular groups, as Palestinians often measure generation in relation to the *Nakba* of 1948 (see also Sa'di and Abu Lughod 2007). A second relevant issue was raised by Loretta Baldassar, who explored the importance of various forms of communication in enabling 'co-presence' among distant family members, be it 'virtually' through the internet or telephone, 'by proxy' through objects such as written and audio letters, 'physically' by visiting, and 'imaginatively' by keeping relatives 'in one's heart' (Baldassar 2008, 252).

This section contributes to these discussions firstly by examining the range of technologies employed by Palestinians living in Britain to communicate with family elsewhere in the world, but also by exploring the relative importance of different modes of communication to different people and the kinds of relationships to which they contribute. Specifically, I highlight the diversity of communication forms and patterns within and across family members of different ages and how the qualities of various modes of communication appeal differently to people. I then go on to explore the domestic dynamics of dispersed family relatedness, firstly through networks of houses in different places and secondly through patterns of visiting and the associated

performances of kinship. Specifically, I examine imaginaries of 'family without borders', in which kinship is claimed to be unaffected by diasporic geographies, by investigating attitudes towards visiting family and interactions among relatives during visits. In doing so, I foreground the social production of family relationships and the many 'borders' that are negotiated along the way.

Virtual realities of family

The telephone was cited by many participants as a primary means of keeping in touch with family elsewhere and our interviews would sometimes be interrupted by calls from parents, siblings and cousins in other parts of the world:

> Jameel: I think the main thing is phone.
>
> Ilyas: of course, talking over the phone maybe it's a daily practice. You know, one day I will pick up the phone and phone my sisters and brothers in the United States and of course my uncles, aunties and so on.
>
> Tawfiq: I use the phone often, yes. My preferred communication is the phone. I email sometimes, you know, but mostly the phone, just to get that one-to-one.
>
> Zaki: to be honest, I phone them. I talk to them when my mum phones because I'm not really- I don't like to pick up the phone and ring […] I do sometimes talk to them on Facebook but not a lot. I send, like, emails and things like that but I prefer more to [talk on] the phone.

The primacy of the telephone is thanks in part to an increase in the number of households with their own telephone, as well as to improvements in communications infrastructure, such as fibre-optic cables and low-orbiting satellites, which have dramatically reduced the cost of international calls over the past twenty years (Vertovec 2004; Wilding 2006). In a continuation of this trend, the rise of internet phone providers, such as Skype, and the spread of both high-speed internet and domestic computer technology have liberated Nawal from the pressure of the telephone bill and transformed her conversations with family abroad:

> Nawal: you know, years ago when I came to England and it was so hard because things were more expensive, telephone calls, and there were no really messenger on computer
>
> Liana: or Skype
>
> Nawal: nothing like that. Or Skype. So I used to call [my parents] every two weeks. They used to call me every two weeks
>
> Liana: hellohowareyoufineyeahwe'refineeverybody'sfine!
>
> [*laughter*]

> Nawal: now I talk for more than an hour with my mum and I don't really count it because it's nothing.

Ilyas also relies on Skype to remain in touch with his wife and daughters in Britain during his months away working in Dubai. Nawal joked that, 'we are married on Skype!' and Alifa described him as 'a virtual granddad': 'whenever the computer starts up and Mustafa hears the *wooo*, you know, sound of Skype he goes "that's granddad!"' Talking over the internet thus allows Ilyas, Nawal, Alifa and Mustafa to remain in daily and leisurely contact. As Liana dramatised, a breakneck conversation is no conversation at all and technology has fortunately replaced it with an unhurried exploration of news and everyday goings on. As Ilyas said, talking with relatives on the phone is a daily practice in their house and it is the mundanity of these conversations that is the most crucial component of keeping in touch, as people feel more 'involved' in one another's lives through hearing the details of one another's everyday existence (Wilding 2006; Parreñas 2005). In other words, it is the little things that keep people together and years can fly by if these are not maintained. As Wadad said, 'you kind of let go of little things and suddenly you realise that, I mean, I haven't seen cousins in twenty years'. Moreover, the act of speaking directly to a loved one somewhere else and hearing their voice come back down the earpiece is often considered a more 'emotional' mode of communication because of the sensory experiences of talking and listening, which 'more effectively enable co-presence' (Baldassar 2008; Panagakos and Horst 2006; Licoppe 2004). As Tawfiq said, he prefers the phone because it's a 'one-to-one' medium. Fu'ad and Lutfiyya, too, liked to hear people's voices and to feel the emotional connection that goes with it.

For the Haniyyah daughters, the telephone was more than a means of keeping in touch with family in different countries, it was part of a support network between them and their cousins who also live in Britain and who are like brothers to them partly through having shared experiences of growing up 'different':

> Mai: our cousins, they were brought up in a very similar way compared to, you know, even friends [*inaudible*]. We've got a lot of shared values and that helps because, you know, your family's your main support system, even in the way you grew up.
>
> Liana: […] So at school and things like that, we went through things that we were able to share with our cousins and help each other because, you know, we understand and we go through the same things. I thought that was really helpful because without

> them it would have been quite difficult. It was really good to have somebody, you know, I can pick up the phone to my cousin and say to him "oh, you know, this and this happened to me today and it really upset me", you know, "what would you have done?" and he'd say "oh, you know, it happened to me before. I did this" […] So it really helps because we'd both grown up from scratch here with our parents, having the background and then living here with different religion to most people.

Another much less common form of embodied communication with family is that of written letters: 'at university, when I got the letter from home it was like *holding them*', said Jameel. For this reason he prefers letters to email, which he regards as an impersonal, alienating medium and too akin to work because 'you have to sit in front of the machine'. Letters, in contrast allow people to 'connect physically with each other', not through literal co-presence but through holding the piece of paper itself, tracing the imprint of their pen on the page and the expressive contours of their handwriting (Baldassar 2008; Fitzgerald 2008). Moreover, letters to family are a means for Jameel to revive his Arabic, which has been eroded by his years in the States and Britain. Although other participants had made attempts to keep in touch via post, these quickly gave way to faster and less time-consuming modes of communication such as email, Facebook and instant messenger. Tayyib, for instance, is constantly in touch with his nephews and nieces via email: 'if I get some nice emails, I send to them or forward it to them and they keep- they keep me informed about everything'. Similarly, Tawfiq is in daily contact with his sisters via email, despite his preference for speaking on the phone:

> Sometimes I get emails- two, three emails a day, you know, from my sisters, you know, one of them. And eh from my niece in Cairo, sometimes I get emails from her. But mostly it's the contact, I prefer to contact by word of mouth. It's better, you know, it's more-

Mai and Noura, however, were particularly fond of using the social networking site, Facebook, to keep in touch with their cousins. 'You can find all your cousins and send them messages', said Mai. As Noura elaborated, 'you see pictures and you get chatting and you get to know each other. So it's quite good'. There are also Facebook groups associated with particular towns and villages in Palestine, created and populated by current and former residents, and those with family connections, like Noura:

> My dad's family [are] from Ramallah but originally from a small village in Beituniya and I was on Facebook and randomly found, you know, the Beituniya group and, like, you know, half of my dad's extended family that I don't even know of, you know, are

> on there. So it's a great way to keep in contact, directly and indirect. For example, like, I still don't know who the members are in that group but you go on there and you see it and you're like "oh wow, I have to join it" because it's, like, it's part of you and who you are. So you just join it and it's quite good because you get to see photos, you get chatting to different people, different topics. And even though they're totally random and have nothing in common with you and if, you know, they were here, you'd probably- and you know they weren't from [Beituniya] you wouldn't chat to them, but because you've got that one small, tiny link, all of a sudden you think "oh my god, I've actually got so much in common."

These Facebook groups relating to Palestinian villages build loose relationships with distant 'relatives' around the world on the basis of a single geographical connection. In the process, they draw on collective 'nostalgia for an imagined time when place, identity, culture and ancestry coincided', which mobilises genealogical connections to claim cultural and political belonging (Nash 2003, 179). Noura does, however, acknowledge the tensions present within this kind of relatedness, as she declares that, by itself, a shared interest in this geographical connection is not sufficient to sustain a meaningful relationship in person and that without any other common interests they would have nothing to do with one another. However, social networking is enabling relationships to be performed in finer and finer increments of intimacy by making it possible to connect with people in as much depth or superficiality as one chooses. Thus, relationships within the space of the Beituniya Facebook group are formed on the basis of a single shared interest in geographical belonging, while other divergent interests (or lack thereof) can be ignored as irrelevant. Furthermore, indulging this shared interest in online forums like Facebook is itself part of the process of not only discovering but becoming 'family' (Nash 2003, 195). Viewing one another's photographs is crucial here as it is through the very act of looking that individuals are constituted within the space of the family (Hirsch 1997, 9). In this way, the shared ancestral meaning of Beituniya opens up a whole extended family for Noura, who she doesn't 'know' and who are 'totally random and have nothing in common with you' but among whom she feels a sense of closeness and belonging through chatting, sharing photographs and tracing lineage to a common place: 'it's part of you and who you are'.

Facebook is clearly a rich arena for cultures of relatedness, but as I have shown it is just one of a constellation of communication technologies employed by participants. My discussion here centres upon individual practices partly because my research sample

is too small to make claims about larger patterns of communication but also because attempts by participants to discern generational differences in patterns of communication were always contested. Liana Haniyyah pointed out that, although older relatives might use the phone more often, they are still tangentially involved in internet-based communications: 'they're like "oh, you've got pictures, show us"'. Her grandfather is also a keen user of messenger and often requests help from his granddaughters in navigating the Al Jazeera website. Similarly, Noura felt that 'the older generation are better at keeping in contact by telephone, whereas the new generation is more the internet', with the immediate exception being her brother, Zaki, who prefers speaking on the phone, albeit when his mother hands him the receiver, as he said earlier. Noura also pointed out that her aunt and uncle are extremely active on the internet, particularly social networking sites such as Facebook and hi5. Therefore, for Noura, the key to patterns of communication lies not in one's age but in the age of the person being contacted:

> I wouldn't pick up the phone and call my cousin and go "hi, how are you?" but then on the other side, yeah, I would send her a message or an email saying "oh hi, how are you?" Picking up a phone would not seem- I'd do that to my grandma but not to my cousin. It just doesn't seem the norm to do- or something, you know, that I would do.

Thus she says that communication from 'younger generation to younger generation' has moved away from the phone and now centres on email, Facebook and messenger. Moreover, the age-difference between herself and her cousins changes the tenor of their relationships and encourages them to communicate in more casual and less intimate ways via the internet:

> All our cousins are quite a lot older than us and so, you know, you don't just- if maybe one of our cousins was quite close to our age and we were very good friends then maybe the situation would be different but because from my mum's side of the family, like, all of our cousins, you know, we are- the four of us are practically the youngest. We have one cousin only that's younger than us and, you know, they're married with children. So your interests are quite different and you don't have that much in common with them.

Thus it is a constellation of communication technologies that are enrolled in performances of kinship over a range of distances. People may have their favoured media, but these are frequently used in tandem with other technologies. Moreover, the

relationships forged and maintained through these different methods of communication, although necessarily different from those among physically proximate family, have a special substance of their own. There is still a 'family feeling'. Indeed, Noura feels that her relationships with other relatives, particularly with her aunts and uncles, are better than one might expect given that they live in Jordan and Noura in Britain; that they 'feel the bonds of their relationships' beyond the obligations of kinship (Carrier 1999, 21):

> For example, one of them called yesterday and we're still on the phone joking about. So we don't feel there's this thing- yeah, we don't know each other face to face but we still manage to, you know, sit there and chat away and joke with each other. And when I- you know, if I go visit my aunt when she was in Jordan, sort of go and visit and spend the whole day with her and you don't feel just because I've not been with them that they are a stranger. It's- I don't- I don't feel that at all, to be quite honest with you. That maybe has a part to play with personality but I think the phone and you know technology now is playing a big part in it.

Thus technologies of keeping in touch bring distant kin emotionally closer, thereby challenging notions of 'family' as something that happens 'elsewhere', while at the same time reinforcing the distances between relatives through the very need for technology. In exploring this, I have concentrated on how participants construct virtual, proxy and imaginative 'co-presence' over distances, but one participant has taken a more material approach to dispersed family relatedness, which revolves around houses and also draws upon Arab social traditions of the *diwan*.

Materialities of connectedness

Tayyib and his wife have two houses, one near his wife's family in Britain and another near his relatives in Jordan, so that he, Isabel and the children have a place of their own in which to stay when visiting family:

> Because I belong there [in Jordan] as well, I built a house among them, near my father and mother and in order to feel I'm still there […] Like I did here: I bought a house near my father- my in-laws in order to have a big umbrella for both sides […] you know, to cover both. I have a house in Jordan and a house here near my in-laws in London […] in order to be fair.

This Jordanian house serves practical as well as emotional functions, as Tayyib's son, hoping to escape the recession in Britain, is living there while he looks for a job. As

such, these houses provide an infrastructure of security and they also operate in a similar way to his family's network of *diwan*, albeit on a smaller scale. In Jordanian parlance, *diwan* refers to a house, or a room within a house, that is dedicated to providing hospitality and entertaining guests (Al-Shahi 1986). According to Susan Slyomovics (1998: 137-139), in Palestinian Arabic these guesthouses are more commonly known as the *maḍafeh,* which were built to provide a space for 'discharging the sacred duty of hospitality'. I use *diwan* rather than *maḍafeh* because Tayyib refers to his family's guesthouse as a *diwan*. As Tayyib explained, in the days before hotels the *diwan* served to host visitors to a village, mainly traders who were not able to make a return journey in the same day. According to Palestinian-Arab traditions of hospitality, for the first three and a half days, a village and their principal family should extend their welcome and generosity unconditionally. Only after three and a half days had passed was it considered polite to inquire about a person's reason for visiting, the predicted length of stay or even their name. In order to perform these duties, a *diwan* would have its own piece of agricultural land that funded its own maintenance, including physical upkeep and the provision of food and drink for guests. According to Tayyib, the *diwan* also provides a means of locating friends in an unfamiliar town, as upon mentioning their family name you will be led directly to this main house. In this way, as Slyomovics (1998) suggests, the *diwan* constitutes the public face of an established local family, both expressing and shaping its relations with the rest of the world. As Tayyib explained of his family's *diwan* in Abu Dis:

> If anybody from the family passed away, you know, the other families come to give us condolences. Or if there is- I mean, if there is somebody wants to marry, you know, the two families, you know, meet together and agree, you know, the- the other family ask, you know, the hand of one of our uh daughters […] or vice versa, so that can be done in the *diwan*.

However, the *diwan* also dramatises 'the relation of kin among themselves' by serving as meeting places for the extended Arab family (the *ḥamouleh* or clan) and providing 'arenas for activities designed to reinforce and perpetuate the kinship group as a social unit' (Slyomovics 1998: 137). In this sense, the *diwan* also acts as a private space in which to attend to business concerning the clan or one of its members, and perhaps

even a communal house accommodating several generations of a sub-clan or family, known as a *daar*:

> I mean the houses nowadays are not big enough as it was before. I remember, you know, my grandfather's house used to- to uh have or consist of fifteen- fifteen rooms and my- my uh uncles, all of them, and my father were living together and they- for instance, the wives, my mother and my other uncles' wives they used to cook together […] and we used to have dinner or supper or whatever together in one big room. It is not possible anymore especially, you know, uh women nowadays want their independence, they want their own um houses or they don't want to share. It is, you know, uh life is evolving, life is changing.

Tayyib added that these changes in attitude accompanied changes in working practices, in which everyone comes home at different times rather than working together in the fields all day and returning en masse and at a set time. Indeed, as lives have evolved, so has the *diwan*. In Kuwait, for example, they serve as gathering and networking places for feminist and political groups (Slyomovics 1998). For the Rifa'iyya clan, however, they continue to provide loci for a family that has been scattered across the world because of education, marriage, employment and political upheavals. Their *diwan* in Jordan, for instance, is the venue for their annual family get-together, in which several big parties will be held over the course of a month so that everyone has an opportunity to meet up. Moreover, the *diwan* also provided a means of communication among family members during times of upheaval when normal lines of contact were down. During the invasion of Kuwait, for example, when there was no other way to contact Tayyib and Isabel, his sister-in-law sent a letter to Jordan with simply his name and family name, which found its way to the *diwan* and from there to Tayyib.

In this way, the Rifa'iyya *diwan* has served a range of different functions over time, including hosting strangers, and locating, contacting and centring a large and increasingly disparate family. In this latter capacity, the *diwan* helps to domesticate a diasporic family by providing both an arena and a node for performances of relatedness (see also Ghabra 1987). Families without a network of *diwan* still cultivate a kind of domestic intimacy by paying visits to the houses of relatives around the world and receiving guests in turn, although these practices are always in negotiation with architecture and varying concepts of privacy.

Family without borders?

Visiting family was considered very important by most participants, often because it enabled them to temporarily reunite and immerse their children in the large Arab family they miss out on in Britain. For some, like Ilyas, this had become easier since moving to Britain, since the possession of passports had shrunk relative distances among family, in spite of the increase in physical distance, as discussed earlier. Whilst this may be so, other factors do impinge upon participants' abilities to travel. Faruq lamented the financial barriers to spending more time with relatives in Jordan. The main obstacles for Ilfat, however, were her fear of flying and organising a visit around her children's busy, independent lives. For Jameel it was politics that prevented him from visiting his siblings in the States for eight years, although not his daughter, Layla, who journeys to the US every year to spend time with her cousins. As an only child, Jameel says, Layla has not had his experience of a family life with lots of siblings but these visits to the States have enabled closer relationships with her multitude of aunts, uncles and cousins than most British children would have and, with that, a kind of security that money cannot buy:

> She missed having a brother or a sister, like that. Well, there they are [in the States]. You know, my brothers have many of them and she has a kick out of visiting with them and they become her insurance. Life insurance. So that's Eastern, it's not Western. Definitely it's Eastern. […] Very important. Very, very important. There's no insurance in life other than family, that's my view. So that's it, she has many homes. If something happens, she has many homes. It's simple like that.

For Jameel, large family 'there' compensates for small family 'here' by cultivating a domestic closeness between Layla and her relatives over great distances: 'she has many homes'. Moreover, his notion of life 'insurance' twins family and home in a manner which mobilizes ideas of home as both a scene of safety and a set of incontrovertible relationships and naturalises the incorruptible bonds of kinship by casting family as unconditional protectors. At the same time, however, the purpose of Layla's visits is to *produce* these ostensibly organic bonds, which might otherwise be weakened by physical distance. Thus, although Jameel argues that security (i.e. home) is a 'simple' (i.e. natural) matter of family, he implicitly understands that kinship is also 'a social process in which the relations that matter are selectively performed' (Nash 2005, 452) and that, without these transatlantic visits, his daughter's 'life insurance' would be

compromised. The effort made by all participants to remain connected with kin elsewhere suggests that they are aware that family relationships are made as well as given. Kinship may be imagined as natural and incontrovertible, but participants' need to visit family around the world and the scaling of familial closeness demonstrates that kin are also socially produced.

Attending to the actual sites of family togetherness is in order here, as domestic proximity was often mentioned as the greatest pleasure of visiting family. However, sharing domestic space was about more than establishing familiarity among dispersed relatives, it was bound up with the upbringing of diasporic children as this was the only environment where they could be immersed in Arab cultures of discipline and could learn about the intimacy of family relationships by observing them in practice. Wadad, for example, felt that her sons have much more social freedom during visits to Palestine and Egypt than they do in their normal lives in Britain, as they are able to temporarily tap into the social capital of ethnic and kin networks in a way they cannot in the UK:

> Especially in Nablus because um where we live there's lots of aunts and uncles and cousins, and you can see it in the boys, how they behave. They're very much more um open, probably a lot happier, because everything- there's no restrictions as such. It's just a way of life. The front door is open you just pop in and out. Everything is very warm and welcoming, which we can't do here because we don't have family around to kind of create that atmosphere.

By contrast in Britain, Wadad feels that her children receive very little of what she would consider to be appropriate guidance from mainstream society and culture. Efforts to provide her own guidance often involve manipulating their social lives or encouraging them to go out with their Arab rather than English friends:

> Because then I know that their parents have brought them up right from wrong. Then- and they will kind of- if one of them decides to do something that's wrong, I know the others will say to them "look, come on, it's not right". Had they been with other English friends then I don't think that they'd see the difference of what-, you know, it's absolutely fine. Whatever he wants to do he can do.

Staying with relatives therefore allows Wadad's sons more freedom because they are immersed in an environment of shared values and there are many more people than their two parents to police their behaviour. Ilyas and Nawal went as far as to say that living in England had led them to have fewer children: 'because we have nobody to help

us, we have nobody here,' said Nawal, 'so it's hard for me to raise them by myself. Back home the mother would help, the sister would help'. A little later Ilyas added, 'because we were alone and we were worried that if we had more children we cannot really bring them up correctly or bring them up to the best we can do. I think that was the worry'.

These patterns of (temporary) domestic closeness with family are not only about making visits but also about receiving guests, although the physical properties of individual houses enable and constrain participants' abilities to host visiting relatives, just as they did social relationships in the previous chapter. Families without borders have domestic boundaries. In this respect, Ilfat and Maryam were fortunate to have a large Victorian house that could accommodate a multitude of relatives and friends in times of celebration, during Maryam's wedding, and at times of great sadness, when Isma'il passed away:

> Ilfat: when we had the difficulty when my husband was not well, when he was in hospital, in coma, everybody stayed here didn't they?
>
> Maryam: yeah
>
> Ilfat: I think, many families came and just stayed with us
>
> Joanna: so a support network
>
> Maryam: yeah
>
> Ilfat: and family from abroad came also. My husband's father and brothers and my mum and my brothers and my uncle. We had loads and loads of people around. So it was convenient to have a big house […] it was one of the reasons why we wanted a big house.

Wadad was less fortunate, however, as her inflexible British house explored in the previous chapter holds significantly fewer visitors than she would like:

> You probably noticed in Palestine a lot of the houses, even the small houses, are structured in that you can always accommodate um people to come and stay because that's what usually happens: they come and they stay for a few days. It's all very um very welcoming, very- you just take for granted you go to see somebody, you'll stay a few nights. So the way they built houses even is that you can accommodate more beds. It's very different, very different […] Whereas here, if my parents want to visit or Tawfiq's family, I mean we really have- we struggle.

Amina found her own house similarly inadequate for staging large parties with all her friends. However, she and her husband, Burhan, at least had sufficient guest-space

to extend open invitations to their parents and siblings, which was part of their initial attraction to the house. Like Maryam in her tiny room in Paris, Amina invited everyone over once she moved in: 'it was as if I have a palace: "oh you must come! You and your children!"' However, unlike Maryam's abode, Amina's house boasts a small annex just off the main hallway, which was immediately assigned by the children to *Tayta* (meaning 'granny'), and they also converted their garage into a studio where Burhan's brother stayed for several months. Although circumstances have forced Amina to let *Tayta*'s room to a lodger and the studio to another tenant, she recalls the pleasure of inviting and receiving guests, particularly family: 'to actually be able to invite people and provide the space, you're right, it was- it was really nice. It was important. It was nice'.

These reflections on the production of diasporic family closeness through shared domestic spaces are to varying extents romanticised. As Alifa and her sisters commented earlier, the reality of living close to of family is not 'all love and absolutely amazing' and the so-called authenticity of family relationships can lie more in people's ability to find one another a nuisance than in idealised holiday memories, as it may be the very temporariness of these experiences (rather than the quality family time) that is source of pleasure. This was certainly the case for Maryam, who stood out by declaring that on visits to see her relatives in Jordan she found being immersed in such an environment overwhelming:

> I don't like families too much over there. It's very much, like, pressurised. Where the family is everything, where there's no sort of outside or personal space because the family is so close-knit that it gets just too intense. […] I think with a lot of, like, Arab families, especially, like, in Arab countries, it's very intense, you know, people in and out all the time and there's no personal space at all and you tend to live quite close to each other, you know, even in the same building sometimes, you know, flats above each other and things. You know, if you're always seeing family in your face and there's no other sort of social contact apart from people who are related to you in some way and it just gets really much [*laughs*].

This is 'family without borders' in its most literal sense, something with which Maryam struggles because she values the privacy and the maintenance of social boundaries that are part of her life in Britain. Here she has a place to which she can escape and not be bothered. Also, as a woman, she can go out for a walk or on an errand without being accompanied by a small army of protective relatives:

> You just think "ok, I need a breather" and you can't take a breather because then everyone starts, you know, "oh, well, where are you off to? Oh, I'll come with you. Come on! Come on!" And then they call everyone down from all the other flats and you're just like [*sighs*] going insane. […] I mean, it's great as a support network, where it- you know, you do need support. But all the time, it's just intense. […] I mean they do it 'cause they care about each other and, you know, they like spending time with each other but I guess 'cause we were raised in a sort of different environment where you do have your own space and you respect other people's boundaries and so it's very different going over there and suddenly feeling like, you know, it's fine for anyone to just come in and out, and up and down and, you know, dump the kids and go out and then come back and pick them up and it's just all, like, different sort of family [*laughs*].

While she acknowledges the love with which all of this attention is bestowed, Maryam still craves a place in which to, in Jameel's words, '*whooit* sit down, hide and whatever'. Although in Britain she lives in the most casually open of all the houses I visited, the traffic of visitors does not compare to her experiences in Jordan because local boundaries of independence and privacy apply: Maryam can come and go as she pleases without accompaniment; her mother's friends have keys to the house but this does not permit access to her own room. The borderlessness of family life in Jordan thus reveals subtle boundaries at work in her relatively open house back in Britain: only certain people have keys, and the house brims with guests when they are called upon, either by invitation or for family support.

What all of this shows is that *al beit*, as a space for the social production of kinship, stages a kind of family togetherness that can be overwhelming when everyone lives close to one another, disappointing when the house is not full enough, as well as enjoyable when guests do not compromise privacy. In the process, fantasies of blissful togetherness are indulged and challenged as participants work to reconcile different cultures of family *fil beit*. Houses here are being enrolled in strategies of intimacy and relatedness that play out both through physical practices of visiting and hosting, as well as over the telephone and the internet. In the process, notions of Arab family as existing in a spatial and temporal 'elsewhere' are at once challenged by the intimacy between participants and their relatives, and reproduced by the myriad communication technologies and long-haul journeys involved in cultivating that intimacy. It is here that ostensibly incontrovertible relationships of kin are socially (re)produced. In the

next section I pursue family relationships and domestic spaces further, this time specifically in the context of life in Britain and the linguistic politics of raising children.

Family *fil beit*

When Jameel is commissioned by a client to expand their house, the first thing he does is sit down with all the occupants to find out about their lives and their desires. 'I ask so many personal questions it's embarrassing sometimes,' he says, 'but the more embarrassing it is, the more real it is', and the more real it is, the more Jameel (as well as the family) learns about their individual and collective needs. This process is of profound importance to Jameel, not only because of the amount of money being invested in him but because of how he regards the relationship between house, family and social cohesion. As discussed earlier, Jameel regards a family and their house/home as one: 'a total thing'. However, families are not utopias, rather they are bursting with dissonant, harmonious, contrapuntal, cacophonous emotions: 'It's like an orchestra. Sometimes very bad music, very bad vibes, yeah?' According to Jameel, if the different parts of this ensemble do not connect with each other, 'that misconnection manifests itself in tragedy: in crime, drugs, social upheaval'. His work is, therefore to connect them together:

> "Ha! Why am I fighting you?!" You know, like this. "Why am I- why am I not coming home until midnight or after- or whatever? Why am I freaking out, going to some social club and killing somebody, or whatever, getting drugs?" We need that, we need to go out, as I told you, we need to go out [and be ourselves], but unfortunately I cannot control the 'out' […] what I want to do is, when you come home, it's not only to sleep but to connect with the rest and learn, get energy from it. That's possible. It has been possible anyway.

To a certain extent, Jameel's views are echoed in Amina's conversations with her estranged husband about their family and their house as a single, spiritual entity:

> I keep saying to Burhan "there is- there is me, there is you, there are the kids. The family is us in [this] road. This is who we are. That has a character. That has- that is a somebody. That's an entity. Who we are in this house is not just me and- we're not just the product. We're not just individuals. There is an entity by itself."

In this final section, I will explore the dynamics of this entity – the relationships that compose it, the spaces that shape it, the practices that sustain it – and how these can

be moulded in the name of cultural, religious, spiritual, political, collective and individual identities. I do this by discussing the role of language in the cultural upbringing of children and the politics of belonging and identity that it carries with it. 'Language is much more than a means of communication', it is an agent of identity (re)production in relation to place (Portes and Rumbaut 2001, 113; see also Fortier 2000). Arabic is particularly interesting here as it takes several different forms, each relating to different spiritual, intellectual and geographical communities. There are three interrelated strands within the Arabic linguistic family: Qur'anic or classical; modern standard (*fus'ħa*); colloquial (*ămiyeh*). The first is the language in which God is said to have spoken directly to the Prophet Muhammad and constitutes the root of all other forms of Arabic. Modern standard Arabic was developed as a means of communication across the Arab world and is the language of international Arabic television programmes and news media. Both of these languages require formal schooling and are not the languages of everyday interaction. For that people use the colloquial Arabic of their particular region. These dialects are loosely designated by national boundaries and it is quite difficult (but not impossible) to make oneself understood in, say, Morocco using Palestinian Arabic.

This section develops the 'spatialities of Palestinian family' discussed in previous sections by exploring more specific dynamics of family *fil beit* as both a mode of belonging and a context for the (re)production of identities. By way of introduction to these topics, I begin with two sketches of special places and practices for families *fil beit*. The first centres on Amina's sofa and something she does with her children when she gets in after a very busy day.

Intimate moments of family and home

> I rush upstairs, I change into my loose, really loose clothes and then come down here, feed the kids, lie on the sofa and they climb on top of me like little kittens, all three of them. This has been going on for years and years and years […] they call it "cosy cosy time", that's what they call it.

Amina will sometimes fall into a light sleep, safe in the knowledge that her son, Zayd, is old enough to make sure that the house does not burn down, and this brief nap is a blessing to her since she does not sleep much at night these days. Other times she will doze with her head in her young daughter's lap 'and that's home', she says, '*yănni*,

to feel that kind of comfort it's- I don't- *yănni* it does sound trivial but that's just my- my thing'. 'Cosy cosy time' does not happen every day and nor does it happen on purpose. However, there are two crucial elements of it, which are putting on her baggy clothes – 'which I don't want anyone to see me in except the kids' – and locking the front door – 'you lock the door and it's just you and kids, and this is home'. Only then can she relax in the knowledge that the day is over. When Burhan still lived there, all five of them could sometimes be found sharing the same sofa: 'five people, a six-bedroom house, four bathrooms and we're occupying this sofa'. This sketch foregrounds various embodiments of relaxation and home, through Amina's sleepy body curled up with her children and her baggy-clothed body once her public performances of 'teacher', 'mother' and 'taxi-driver' are over. Moreover, for Amina family is itself a kind of body, whose entangled limbs in one small corner of the house constitute home.

While Amina's story emphasises the importance of everyday practices and relationships to senses of belonging in a particular place, for Wadad it has been *ceremonial* practices and bodily performances that have provided an anchor for her during bouts of homesickness and feelings of not belonging in Britain. The last time she felt this way was one Eid when her children were quite young: 'I remember feeling "oh gosh, I really don't belong here. I don't belong anywhere. I need to be somewhere where I'm- where I'm happy"'. Wadad goes back to visit her family in Nablus a lot more often now and so has not experienced this feeling in a long time, but back then she chose to tackle the situation by implementing the family practices she had grown up with:

> I decided we're going to do exactly what we do back home, which is, you know, dress the children up in their new clothes and just copy what we do at home and give them little presents. And they were really little, they wouldn't even have noticed, they must have been about two or three years old, so to them it wouldn't have meant anything. But I decided to do that, to take them out for the day, to give them a good time and then to make Arabic sweets. Actually, the first time I thought "no, I have to learn how to do this" to show them what they are originally, what their roots are.

What these two short stories shows is some of the ways in which intimate family practices *fil beit*, from the ordinary to the extraordinary, can provide a sense of comfort, belonging and wellbeing. Moreover, they point towards house as the scene of some profoundly important emotional as well as cultural parent-child connections, and a

crucial site for developing diasporic children's sense of familial as well as social belonging and identity.

Linguistic belongings

Raising children is a key concern for many diasporic parents, particularly when living in a society they feel does not share or reinforce their values and ideals. Portes and Rumbaut (2001, 97) quote parents of diverse backgrounds making similar complaints about the lack of discipline in US schools and fretting over the pressures exerted on their children by their peers. Family already plays a central role in teaching cultural and ethnic identity: this is where children 'learn to see themselves in a variety of contexts or roles' (Ballis Lal 2001, 162). The importance of this role is heightened in diasporic contexts if the social milieu is perceived to contradict rather than reinforce parents' teachings. Parents' choices of what to teach their children and how they divide efforts to emphasise different aspects dramatise the range of possible modes and experiences of identity available. Wadad, for example, was primarily concerned that her sons had a sense of cultural belonging as Arabs and therefore made a great deal of effort to instil this in their domestic life, while Tawfiq took charge of their national identity:

> Wadad: They always spoke Arabic, they always- everything we did was very Arabic. The food we ate, the traditions we have, everything we was very Arabic. Even the house, the furniture, it was all very Arabic and Palestinian. So it was important that they identified themselves, maybe not when they were very young but when they grew up, [*inaudible*] they knew that although they are British, they also are Arabs at that stage. We made it as an Arab rather than just specifically Palestinian [thing], because we're also the only family, Palestinian family here so they had nobody to really to relate to […] So I thought if they were brought up as Arabs, there are lots of other Arab nationalities out there, they were one of them. So it's more for a sense of belonging.
>
> Tawfiq: I emphasise that we're Palestinians, I have taught- told them they are Palestinians and I've told them what happened to them and what happened to us, and they saw it, you know, when they [crossed] the borders since they were very young. […] We have left books around to pick up and uh some stuff. They pick up a book and they read it, sometimes they don't, you know. So, we haven't forced on them to read.

In addition, Tawfiq and Wadad established an Arabic school in their local area so that their sons and the other pupils would be able to read and understand the Qur'an. I discuss this larger importance of language and the role of Arabic schools in more depth

in the next chapter. Here I concentrate on the considerable amount of work that Palestinian parents, particularly Muslim-Palestinian parents, have to do in order to raise their children with what they see as the correct mixture of cultural, religious and national affiliation, while respecting the inevitable attachment their British-born or British-raised children may also feel to this culture and society. The house is a key site for this kind of work partly because it is an environment in which parents can control the influences to which their children are exposed. Some studies have explored how children's immersion in environments infused with the practices and values of the 'parent country' not only helps them to feel more comfortable and to participate in activities during return visits, but also cultivates stronger connections with those places having been involved in its cultures on an everyday basis (Levitt 2002). *Fil beit*, then, Wadad was able to ensure that her children were not only surrounded by Arabic and Palestinian objects, as discussed in the previous chapter, but also immersed in Arab and Palestinian language.

Literature on second generation migrants sheds light on the spatial politics of language-learning and identity. In his longitudinal study of language, identity and imagined communities, Rumbaut (2002, 86) found that home was the main site for the learning and maintenance of parental languages among second generation migrants and, on average, over ninety-six percent of participants spoke their parents' language at home. Portes and Rumbaut (2001) also highlight struggles of migrant parents to raise bilingual children and to minimise the creep of English into household talk. Recognising the importance of domestic space in linguistic (re)production, Valentine et al (2008) open up the dynamics of people and space through which this is achieved. Working with Somalis in Britain, the authors discuss how children are often more proficient English-speakers than their parents and their use of English at home can create tension with their parents who seek to enforce Somali language in order to inculcate a Somali identity and a sense of belonging among their dispersed families.

Of the other participants in my research, only Jameel and Fu'ad said they had not enforced an Arabic linguistic order to domestic space. This was partly due to their different feelings about and approaches to their Palestinian identities (see Jameel and Fu'ad's individual introductions). However, their choices were also partly influenced by their marriages to European women who do not speak Arabic. This mean that English,

as the common language within their marriages, also became the common language of their family lives, with Arabic marginalized in order to avoid 'confusing' the children. This selective approach to language within mixed-marriages dramatises the decisions at work in the (re)production of identities and, set alongside the strategies of those in 'unmixed' marriages, it also emphasises the shared parental responsibility for inculcating bilingualism.

Ilfat and Isma'il's children spoke nothing but *ămiyeh* until they were old enough to go to school, where they quickly learned English, and only later were they sent to a weekly Arabic school to learn *fus'ħa* and Qur'anic Arabic. Noura and Zaki Al Rimawi were not permitted to speak to their parents in anything other than Arabic. Noura cites this steadfastness as an important anchor for her growing up Arab and Muslim in Britain. She described it as potentially confusing for children growing up with what she described as a 'sort of clash of cultures, where we're taught one thing at home and we follow one thing, but then we go out and then you sort of, you get- you can get lost'. Strictly-enforced domestic rules around things like language have made this situation easier for her to navigate. A similar set-up was employed in Tayyib's house. Although his wife, Isabel, is English, she speaks fluent Arabic and they were therefore able to enforce an Arabic-only rule at the dinner table. At all other times, however, their children were expected to speak to their father in Arabic and their mother in English, 'in order to let the children have both languages'. 'English they can get it from their cousins here, from the schools and the universities and the society,' he said, 'but Arabic it is only limited. Only at home'. Alifa Haniyyah would agree:

> That's the only way you can keep the two languages really because you're speaking in English, you know, at school, at lunchtime, if you're studying, you know, on TV and with all your friends. So the only way really to keep the language is to speak it at home with your family.

Alifa herself, however, is facing something of a dilemma with her own children. When we spoke, her eldest son was almost two-and-a-half and had already begun to speak in Arabic but knew very little English, despite attending various English-language toddler groups. However, she and her husband, Ibrahim, will soon be moving to his ancestral village, Tira, in Israel and Alifa may then have to adopt Tayyib's 'two parents, two languages' approach:

> When we go back he's going to have Arabic from people he speaks to [in Tira], he's going to learn Hebrew at school and English. But I don't know, maybe when I get there maybe I'll make an effort to speak with him in English not Arabic.

As such, the linguistic abilities of Alifa's son are going to depend not only on where he lives but on his relationships with people: his father's family, his teachers, his Palestinian and Israeli friends and, of course, with his mother. In addition to family members acting as teachers of *ămiyeh*, this language also plays a crucial role in forging family relatedness itself. Wadad, for example, was determined that her sons would know Palestinian Arabic so that they could communicate with their relatives in Palestine and Jordan, as well as Tawfiq's family around the world. Similarly, Noura felt that sharing language with her relatives in Jordan helped them to identify with one another and build closer relationships in spite of their distance. Indeed, as Liana pointed out, Arabic may also be the only way to communicate with grandparents, even while she and her cousins switch back and forth between English and Arabic. Thus, as the language of the family, colloquial Arabic is crucial to feelings of relatedness among those who live at a distance from one another, as it provides the tools of communication through which relationships and connectedness are forged.

Languages, however, also provide access to wider social, cultural and political worlds (Bhabha 1994). Here I am concerned with the intersections between *ămiyeh*, *fus'ħa* and English within participants' social lives and the implications of these for identities and social belonging. Firstly, Palestinian belonging itself is to a certain extent at stake in knowledge of *ămiyeh* and *fus'ħa*, particularly for those such as Maryam and Noura who have grown up in Britain and might be required to 'prove' themselves, but also because language is a basic requirement for social (and political) participation:

> Maryam: there is that expectation, isn't there? Where you sort of think, like, you *have* to know the language to be able to access that community. You can't be a member of the Palestinian community without having sufficient language to be a part of it because otherwise you'd always sort of [*inaudible*] not really having full access. Just the social aspect of it […] 'cause regardless, really, of your political views or whether you have any or not, you're still part of that community, aren't you?
>
> Joanna: but if you don't have the common language to even to start communicating about all that stuff then
>
> Maryam: yeah you're never really going to be part of that community.

Similarly for Noura, Arabic was 'one big thing […] one expectation' of Palestinians of any religious background or birthplace. 'If you're Palestinian it's like you have to know Arabic also,' added Zaki. Noura suggested that this expectation was more than an issue of 'access' to community, it was part of a political responsibility to maintain the Arabic language among diasporic Palestinians who might lose their language as the generations wear on. Taking the example of Hebrew, which provided a linguistic bond among Israeli immigrants from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, Noura made the case for Arabic to be not only the glue among Palestinians but a kind of proof of belonging: 'it's part of who we are. You can't deny a language'. The implication here is that not speaking Arabic could be used by political opponents who deny the existence of a Palestinian identity, particularly the endurance of such an identity in diaspora, and in doing so deny Palestinian rights to return to Palestine and establish their own state: 'I've been asked in the past "so where were you born?" "Kuwait." "Well, you're not Palestinian then. You don't live there. You've never been there. You're not Palestinian then"'. Thus language is not only about self-identity but also about how identities are 'read and ascribed by others' (Valentine et al 2008, 381).

Here the linguistic 'proof' of one's Palestinian-ness overlaps with broader processes of Arabic cultural and familial belonging because *fus'ħa*, as the language of international diplomacy, news media, poetry and some television, provides access to news about and political discussions over Palestine, as well as to the wider Arab social and cultural world inhabited by relatives elsewhere. Indeed, for Noura, *fus'ħa* still constitutes a large part of her connectedness to Palestine by enabling her to engage with Arabic news, particularly on the internet:

> If you compare Arabic and English [news] I think it's a world apart in regard to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and sometimes maybe because my Arabic is not so strong reading-wise, you do- you do feel sort of, you know, ok I am missing out on something because, you know, maybe if I read in Arabic more I would have more knowledge and more up-to-date news. So I think- but it does definitely help.

Similarly for Zaki, Palestine provided an impetus to work harder during his Arabic lessons: 'when I became strong with Palestine that's when I actually started learning more Arabic than before'. Maryam, however, values her knowledge of *fus'ħa*

more for the access it gives her to the Arab social and cultural world through the things like music, films and television, things that give substance to people's everyday conversation:

> I think if you didn't speak the language I think I'd feel a bit less connected to the whole culture because you can't tap into a big part of it without the language. There's sort of a barrier there. So I mean now, you grow up and you think "yeah, it's a good job I know Arabic" but when you're little you don't really see the value of it at all […] even, like, little things like in terms of understanding the music, the pop music, or watching a film or something on TV.

It is important to bring English into the frame here, as this was the key language in several participants' social lives. Indeed, somewhat ironically, English was the common language among the students at Saturday Arabic school and the only person they would address in the *fus'ħa* they were being taught was the teacher. This is partly because *fus'ħa* is a very formal language but also because students at such schools often came from a range of geographical and ethnic backgrounds each with its own colloquial language, so the only common language was English. In a somewhat similar way, Noura in particular felt that English rather than Arabic was the key to the multicultural group of solidarity activists that she calls her 'community'. Her views on this created some tension with Faruq:

> Joanna: for you the importance of Arabic school was more about sort of the- being able to access um
>
> Noura: the skills […] not friendship, not identity, not anything else, just the language skills
>
> Faruq: not identity?
>
> Noura: identity, uh I- yeah to learn Arabic
>
> Faruq: yes, it's part of your identity
>
> Noura: but it's not as identity as in- not community because
>
> Faruq: not identity as a community, identity to know your Arabic language
>
> Noura: identity to know
>
> Faruq: identity to know your religion
>
> Noura: but myself
>
> Faruq: your Qur'an
>
> Noura: yeah yeah, my- that's me
>
> Faruq: so that's part of your identity

> Noura: that's me personally but not within the wider commu- for the wider community it's not really made much of an impact because- because of the wider community being- that I identify with is so multi-cultural. We all speak English. Arabic doesn't really play a part in that.

In a somewhat similar way, Ilfat felt that English was central to her life in Britain. Although she had limited English skills when she and Isma'il moved to the UK, her skills quickly developed: 'I just went out from very early on. Since I came here I spoke English, with all the mistakes'. Ilfat is pleased that she adopted this strategy rather than keeping only to Arabic social circles, as it empowers her both socially and politically:

> Ilfat: I like people, I'm fascinated by the variety of things and the diversity. I just love it. I love to make friends from all backgrounds.
>
> JL: so moving to England wasn't a kind of shutting down, it was a big adventure.
>
> Ilfat: it was a very nice experience yeah in some ways, yeah. Open to- opening up to much more, you know, wider experiences and people from wider- just diverse culturally, cultures. Very exciting I think, yeah, for me. […] But I think also, for me, I just feel the need. I think the world can become better if we understand each other as people from different backgrounds and always I have this concept of, you know, the more we understand the better the world will be. But we cannot understand without communicating. So from this angle I view things, you know, that we are living- we are a minority living in a majority. We *have* to have these links. It's not possible to live like an isolated pock-, you know, pocket. […] How could we understand each other then? How can we, without communicating? So I made effort, a lot of effort to go out and mix with people. Didn't wait for people to come to me.

English as a medium of communication for Ilfat is about mutual understanding and improving relations between people from different backgrounds. As part of a minority Arab population in Britain she regards it as her responsibility to reach out to mainstream English-speaking society, not the other way around, otherwise 'how could we understand each other?' Ilfat's own personal curiosity is also a factor here, as it was her thirst for meeting different people and experiencing different cultures that initially spurred her to throw herself 'in the deep water'. However, her spiritual and political passions have also been an encouraging force to reach out to people through language. She describes the two great passions of her life as Islam and Palestine, which she feels are greatly misunderstood and therefore feels an 'overwhelming' need to communicate

directly with people and in the process to 'build bridges': 'because I want people to understand me as a Muslim, woman and Palestinian [*inaudible*] so I make the effort'.

In all of the ways I have discussed, different languages function to construct different senses of 'we-ness' for participants. Clearly, languages enable people to communicate with and (hopefully) understand one another, and it is through those conversations and mutual understandings that connections are made among friends, family, fellow Arabs and Palestinians, and political activists. These are not always interpersonal connections. *Fus'ħa*, for example, is more a way for participants to tap into international news and cultural media than to forge immediate relationships. Moreover, different languages have different significances for different people. English, for example, was socially and politically important to Noura and Ilfat. *Fus'ħa*, on the other hand, was important to Wadad and Tawfiq as a way of meaningfully engaging with the Qur'an, and also to Faruq for feelings of 'identity' and 'community'. It was also important to Noura and Maryam as a mode of access to international culture and political affairs. Whereas *ămiyeh* figured most significantly in family relationships as well as fulfilling expectations of Palestinian-ness that grant participants belonging among Palestinians in Britain. The varying importance of each of these languages and their combinations captured participants' different attitudes towards individual and collective sense of belonging and identity, as well as their desires for particular kinds of relatedness to people and places.

Family dynamics are central to these processes, as parents took responsibility for their children's language-learning and the selective (re)production of identity. The consciousness of participants' decisions regarding which aspects of identity to emphasise dramatises the constructedness of identities. Moreover, the different linguistic strategies employed by mixed and unmixed coupes highlights the importance of shared parental responsibility for their children's cultural upbringing. However, I have also shown that practices of family *fil beit* are not only for children but can contribute to individual feelings of home and identity for parents as well (as in Wadad's approach to Eid) and that *al beit* is more than a pedagogic space, it is the setting for special practices of family intimacy that parents and children produce together ('cosy cosy time').

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the varied and complex geographies of participants' families and how people negotiate these geographies through everyday family practices. It has engaged with different modes of experiencing and imagining the 'feeling' of family, the role of domestic space in the social production of kinship over distances, and how languages learned among family *fil beit* construct senses of 'we-ness' in various ways. In the process, I have opened up a range of 'doings' of family within and between domestic contexts and diasporic spaces, highlighting the social production of relatedness, the work involved in pursuing such relatedness over distance, and the possibilities for different forms and interpretations of family to emerge. As I have shown, family remains an important coordinate of home and identity among Palestinians but diasporic life demystifies the incontrovertibility of kinship and renders visible the work that must go into (re)producing it. The feelings and experiences of family constructed by these means are both impoverished and exaggerated versions of the imagined family for which they strive: when Alifa described family as having being taken from her by *al Nakba*, she lamented nuclear family life in Britain and the distorted magic of diasporic relatedness; similarly, when Faruq recollected his family life and house in Palestine, he belittled the quality of his family life in Britain in order to valorise 'proper' family elsewhere. In this way, although diasporic life precipitates new interpretations of family and relatedness, these remain tied to conventional ideas of 'proper family' as a spatially and temporally situated unit.

Examining how house and homeland figure in these modes of relatedness also opens up the spatialities travelled by participants in their everyday communications with and about family, from the international and imaginative, to the domestic and material. Identity within these geographies of relatedness is something that can connect with but may also exceed a people called 'family' and a place called 'the homeland'. Indeed, by showing how feelings for scattered family relate to ideals of homeland belonging and by exploring ambivalent experiences of family *fil beit*, I have highlighted the crucial intersections between relatedness and various spatialities of home and extended debates around the geographies of familial closeness and distance.

There are, however, wider social geographies of Palestinian family at work in these diasporic cultures of relatedness; geographies in which the literal and societal

'place' of family is itself a coordinate of social relations among Palestinians. In the next chapter, my discussion therefore shifts in scale from the personal and domestic to the social in order to explore how people negotiate individual and collective identities across nationality, culture, religion and politics, and particularly how family names and ancestral places shape practices of collective identity among Palestinians in Britain and their diasporic imaginaries of Palestine.

6 PRACTISING COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES

This chapter explores the dynamics of collective identity among Palestinians in Britain, particularly the overlaps and fissures between different collective identities and the ideas, feelings and practices through which group belonging is forged. My argument is two-fold. Firstly, I suggest that a large national/political entity called 'the Palestinian community in Britain' is a somewhat mythical formation and that in practice there are multiple kinds of 'Palestinian community,' from localised agglomerations of a few Palestinian families, to converging spiritual, cultural and political groupings, as well as family itself. My second argument concerns forms of Palestinian collective identity enacted through conversational practices and performances around family names. Here I suggest that speaking about family names and connections is a means of forging social relatedness, as well as a mode of establishing place-based belonging in Palestine and activating gendered and classed geographies of the homeland in a diasporic context. The purpose of these arguments is to connect with previous discussions around the role of family in social relationships and to take those discussions further by exploring how other group relationships are forged along cultural, spiritual, political and familial lines and by discussing the implications of these practices for identity, belonging and home. This is crucial to understanding the lives and identities of Palestinians in Britain, as it reveals the everyday processes through which hegemonic constructions of Palestinan-ness are imagined, challenged and (re)produced.

In doing so I seek to challenge narratives of Palestinian 'community' in diaspora which re-entrench the nation as the dominant geography of belonging (AbdulGhani 2005; Tarbush 2005). Here 'community' is invoked a synonym for 'population', assuming (without demonstrating) connectedness among Palestinians in a particular country on the basis of shared 'origins' and migration experience. However, this assumed or enforced sameness has a political cost, as it stifles the expression of different views and reproduces the silencing of Palestinians by orientalist and colonial discourses

(Said 1984; 1992). Secondly, it undermines critical attention to what makes Palestinians in various parts of the world a 'community' or what makes a community 'Palestinian'.

As I argued in chapter two, it is productive to think about communities as the idiosyncratic effects of meeting up. That is, as situated, complex and contingent social groupings that are continually (re)produced through the connections between people (Alexander et al 2007; Ahmed and Fortier 2003). Such an approach generates new ways of understanding how people construct identities and social groups, by situating often prioritised connections (such as language and kinship) in relation to often ignored connections (such as friendship). In this chapter, I therefore engage with the other ways in which Palestinians might relate to one another, through wider cultural and religious identities, 'fictive' kinship and political solidarity, and most particularly through shared knowledge about Palestinian family names.

The Palestinian author, Ghada Karmi, has described how questions about family had long been important among Palestinians but that they had become 'obligatory' after 1948, since pinpointing someone's place of origin and lineage allowed people to assess one another's social position and establish any familial connections (Karmi 1999, 56):

> "Are you the Canaans of Nablus or the Canaans of Jerusalem?" my mother would ask. My father, who prided himself on knowing every inch of Palestine, often joined in. But sometimes he was stumped when someone cited the name of a small village. He would worry at it until he found it. "Ah," he would suddenly say, "it's in the district of Jaffa! Why didn't you say so at first?"

At the time, Karmi and her sister thought that this 'obsession' with places and family names was a 'quirk' of their parents but they gradually realised that these practices constituted 'a kind of mapping, a surrogate repopulation of Palestine in negation of the *Nakba*' (ibid.). This comment neatly highlights the two interrelated issues that I address in this chapter: how family functions as a coordinate of social and historical geographies of Palestine, and how these geographies remain alive in dispersal through conversational practices. However, I challenge Karmi's suggestion that these practices constitute a 'surrogate repopulation' and 'recreation' of Palestine in preparation for reclamation, in the manner of village memorial books (see Davis 2007) and online village encyclopaedias (see www.palestineremembered.com). Rather, I argue that part of Palestine *always* lived in these conversational practices of naming and

placing families, and that this talk brings historical spaces of Palestine into a diasporic present *as well as* enabling an imaginative 'return'.

The chapter is organised in three sections. Firstly, I introduce the last three participants in this research, all of whom have appeared in preceding pages but who deserve a fuller introduction here not least because of the key ways in which they derive a notion of their place(s) in the world from various sources. In the second section I explore participants' senses of collective belonging to intersecting groups, from 'conventional' cultural and religious affiliations to those independently forged through everyday relationships of support, often in a domestic setting. Here I discuss the perceived overlaps between being Palestinian and large-scale Arab and Muslim identities, particularly through language and weekend Arabic classes, as well as the construction of political affinities and intimate friendships that are articulated in kin-like terms. In the final section, I turn to the politics of Palestinian group belonging itself, specifically the existence of a 'Palestinian community in Britain' and the production of diasporic Palestinian social relatedness through conversations about family name. Here, I engage with various manifestations and experiences of 'Palestinian community' in Britain, before exploring the specific practices through which Palestinian group belonging operates. Here I focus on conversational practices around family name and the activation of homeland imaginaries in a diasporic context. However, I also weigh up the importance of family and Palestinian belonging against feelings of freedom and escape from those things in Britain.

Stories of home

This section explores three participants' thoughts and experiences of belonging and not belonging within 'British' society. It engages with some of the different bases (social, religious, governmental) upon which people forge senses of belonging in a diasporic context; identities that may connect with but also go beyond the nation. It is worth noting that two of the participants introduced here (Fu'ad and Tayyib) are married to English women, although with quite different implications for practices of home, family and identity. All of these stories raise issues about migration, culture, identity and belonging, about the intersections and divergences between various kinds of national,

spiritual and cultural affiliations, and therefore about the politics of diasporic identity for Palestinians in Britain.

My place is here

Fu'ad Habayib was born in 1938 into an Anglican family near Nazareth and has been living in the UK for over fifty years. Fu'ad's aunt, who had married an Englishman, first invited him to come to Britain when he was a teenager so that he would have educational opportunities not available to him in Israel. Initially he refused this offer as he had intended to join the Anglican ministry like his great-grandfather. But when he failed to pass the exams he applied for a student visa and boarded a boat, spending his twenty-first birthday just outside London. Fu'ad had taken his O- and A-levels in Palestine, which was then under the British mandate, but did not have the grades to do either of the two subjects he was interested in: chemical engineering and medicine. He settled instead on radiography and took up a job in a London hospital. At the same time, Fu'ad' was getting involved with the Methodist church through his aunt and it was at a church group that he met his English wife, Emily. A few years after they married, Fu'ad's job compelled them to move to the north of England, where they lived for twenty years and raised their two children. In the late-1980s, having long ago converted from Anglicanism to Methodism, Fu'ad felt the call to become a minister. The training involved moving around a lot, spending no more than five years in one place. In 2003, however, he retired to the West Midlands in order to be close to Emily's sister, although he continues to preach occasionally and provides pastoral care for a local Methodist church. Over the course of his life in Britain, Fu'ad has been somewhat distant from other Palestinians and Arabs, partly because he has rarely lived in areas with those populations, but also because he was heavily involved with his church circle and was kept very busy during his time as a minister. However, this long disengagement was also a process of coming to terms with some experiences of his childhood, particularly during and immediately after the 1948 war.

Fu'ad spent the first few years of his life in a village just outside Nazareth until the family moved into the town itself in 1942, living in two different places until 1948. Fu'ad particularly remembers the second house because it was near a local police station, where arrested Jewish fighters were held, from which they sometimes escaped

and were then re-arrested. During these bouts of violence the family hid in the basement listening to the sounds of fighting in the street outside. When the mandate collapsed and the British withdrew in 1948, soldiers of the newly-formed State of Israel attacked Nazareth and Fu'ad's family were forced again into the basement, this time for several days. They eventually got word that the local Palestinian leaders were advising people to take temporary refuge in the old city. Tired of coping with the violence alone and attracted by the promise of safety in numbers, the family followed this advice. The move turned out not to be temporary, however, as those same leaders were soon forced to surrender, at which point the Israelis issued orders for Palestinians to stay where they were rather than attempt to return to their own houses, which by this time had been looted.

Although Fu'ad did not say precisely where his family stayed when they fled to the old city, he describes this gathering of Palestinians as helping to knit people more closely together into something like a community and he remembers the local school being especially important. It was run by a Catholic priest but it was open to everyone and although he and the other pupils were forced to drink lumpy powdered milk and spoons of cod liver oil every morning, he was enormously grateful for the structure it brought to his life at the time and the focal point it provided for the traumatised Palestinian population: 'the priest saved us'. At the same time the family had to find somewhere permanent to live, which was a difficult and traumatic task involving forcing their way into the houses of those who had fled north to Lebanon. Fu'ad helped his father in this search and although he was only around ten years old at the time he vividly remembers entering the kitchen of one house and finding breakfast things left on the table. Today Fu'ad remains struck by this memory and the extreme fear and urgent flight that the scene records. Eventually the family set themselves up in the upper floors of a large house, while another family lived on the floors below. The large rooms, elaborate frescos and marble flooring suggested that the house had previously belonged to a very wealthy family. The children found it a wonderful place to play. They particularly loved watching the sunset from the roof and a recreation of that view, painted by his brother, hangs in Fu'ad's living room.

After moving to the UK, Fu'ad wrote about these experiences of moving house in an essay for his O-level English exam, which he was taking for the fifth time and finally

passed, allowing him to study radiography. These childhood experiences have nevertheless remained with him and they are perhaps the reason why he has never liked moving house and has tried to stay in the same place where at all possible. Moreover, it is his memories of living under Israeli rule that for decades discouraged him from getting involved with other Palestinians or speaking out about the Palestinian issue for fear of repercussions. It is only now he has retired that Fu'ad has had more time to explore his Palestinian heritage and connect with his local Palestinian group, slowly 'finding his voice' (his words).

This renewed engagement with Palestine has also renewed his desire to speak Arabic and to have an Arabic home life, brimming with visitors and food, although this is proving difficult to realise. Although when he first arrived in Britain Fu'ad was part of a small Arab-Christian community in London, he became detached from others of this background partly because of their dwindling numbers and also because he and Emily moved to the north of England, which had a much smaller Arab population than it does today. Also, their family life was conducted in English, as Emily did not speak Arabic and Fu'ad thought it would be confusing for his children to be taught this additional language. He openly regrets this decision, possibly because it closed an avenue for keeping Arabic alive in at least one part of everyday life. Instead, English became the dominant language of home, work, church and social circles, except for the letters he received from his father which were always written in Arabic. Indeed, it was his father who once told him that he speaks Arabic 'like a foreigner', which seemed to bother him even while he joked about it. Fu'ad therefore takes every opportunity to speak Arabic when he meets other Arabs, even if they do not share a dialect. He also says that he thinks more in Arabic than English these days and has begun to sing old Arabic hymns from his childhood as well, both of which he attributes to his advancing age and the strangely renewed ability to remember more from one's past. Language thus connects Fu'ad to his childhood and 'the old country' in the same way it did when he first arrived in Britain and was feeling homesick until he heard Arabic on the tube, which lifted his spirits.

More than anything, however, it is hospitality that encapsulates 'home' for Fu'ad. His Eastern heritage, he says, means that 'hospitality is ingrained in me' and something he particularly enjoyed about his work as a minister was the opportunity to visit and

talk to people. He misses that now that he has retired and he expressed a desire for things to be more like they were when he was growing up in Nazareth, where the house was always very busy with people, especially at Christmas and New Year. This is difficult to recreate in England, where Fu'ad says people are often very busy and mostly want to meet outside of the house. Fu'ad also realises that entertaining puts a lot of pressure on Emily particularly in terms of producing Arabic food. Although she was well-versed in Arabic cooking by Fu'ad's aunt in the early years of their marriage and quickly adapted to olives and elevated levels of garlic, it is time-consuming to produce a meal and it is therefore something they tend to do together and for themselves, as they do not have many guests.

Being in a mixed-marriage has influenced Fu'ad's linguistic and culinary practices of home, family and identity in various ways, although he rarely made more than passing comment lest it be taken as criticism of Emily. Instead, he played up his renewed exposure to Arabic food through his local Palestinian group, joking that food was his favourite part of the meetings and emphasising his pleasure in tasting dishes he has not had for years. Also important, of course, are the films and talks by invited speakers about the situation in 'the old land'. The political emphasis of these meetings is a source of debate among the group, with some preferring not to engage with that side of things: 'but', Fu'ad says, 'you can't ignore politics'. Fu'ad's involvement with the group seems to have emboldened him to perform activist work alone, approaching churches to promote the Palestinian issue. His focus is on raising awareness among the British public and among young Arab-Christians who may not have an understanding of the situation. He recounted an occasion when he was invited to lead an Arab-Christian congregation and he chose to talk about Palestine in his sermon. Fu'ad deliberately chose to deliver the service in English to make it accessible to the younger members of the audience and some thanked him afterwards for helping them to understand more of what their normal preacher had been saying and for explaining the Palestinian situation.

In this way Fu'ad's long-held religious convictions and newly-discovered political ones coincide with one another: 'God puts people in their place and my place is here [in Britain] to educate people on the real issues'. He resents the assumption that, because he married an English woman and has lived most of his life in England, he has

abandoned or become a foreigner to Palestine. On the contrary, for Fu'ad it seems that he needed to leave Palestine in order to find his voice for and his connection to it, as well as to reconcile it with his faith and calling as a minister, and it is in keeping in touch with 'the cause' and with people from 'the old country' that he is experiencing a new sense of belonging to a 'Palestinian community' in Britain.

Citizenship, security and the 'dish party'

Tayyib Rifa'iyya is a journalist who has been living and working in London for almost twenty years. Tayyib's family are originally from Yaffa but during the 1948 war they fled first to Jerusalem and then to the village of Abu Dis just outside the city only a few weeks later. Tayyib's father had been an engineer in Yaffa but after their expulsion he was compelled to become a landlord, managing the Rifa'iyya family's large estate of agricultural lands in and around Abu Dis. In the early 1950s, Tayyib's father left Palestine to take an engineering job in Kuwait, with his wife and ten children joining him in 1958. Tayyib completed his high school education in Kuwait before leaving for Cairo to pursue a degree in journalism, later returning to Kuwait to work. It was through a mutual friend at Kuwait University that Tayyib met his wife, Isabel, who was a student at an English university and was spending time in Kuwait as part of her Arabic and Islamic Studies course. Tayyib's family were immediately taken with Isabel and, although the pair made their own decision to marry, Tayyib says that his family's enthusiasm meant a lot to him and takes great pleasure in their claims that it was 'their choice' rather than his:

> Family is very important. Without family I'm not- I didn't go to university. Without family I didn't get my education. I even- you know […] my family asked me to marry [Isabel]. […] When I introduced her to them- because you know first of all, you know, she knew- she knows Arabic so she started to talk with them and they found her very simple, very intelligent, very knowledgeable blah blah blah and all this. So they said 'Tayyib, why don't you marry her?'

Isabel and Tayyib waited until she had graduated before getting married and settling in Kuwait. They remained there until the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, when they and their two sons were evacuated by the British government on the basis of Isabel's continued British citizenship and their sons having been born in the UK. Fortunately, they already had a place to live in England, as they had bought a small flat

near Isabel's parents some years previously in order to maintain ties to Britain and to Isabel's side of the family. After a few years, however, this flat became too small for them and so the family moved to a four-bedroom house in roughly the same area of London where they have stayed ever since. Tayyib is very much at home in this house, particularly in the garden which he describes as 'my two lungs'. He has a wide range of fruit trees, including figs and olives, as well as a palm tree and lots of vines for making *wara 'inab*, a dish of vine leaves stuffed with rice and/or mincemeat. For Tayyib, the fruits of his own garden have a special flavour: 'it's very fresh […] it gives you satisfaction and uh also, you know, of something- it is the fruit of something you have done'. This garden in London also connects him with his grandfather's country house near Yaffa, which had a large orchard that the children would visit almost every weekend, as well as with the cultivated lands he remembers from around Abu Dis.

The settledness implied by Tayyib's garden articulates a broader sense of being 'at home' in England. Home, he says 'is what makes family together, what protects family from outside, all what is going [on] outside'. What happened in Kuwait weighs heavily in this respect, as there was no protection for him and other Palestinians from expulsion even before the Iraq invasion:

> At least I could say in England I'm more secure. From what sense? Because, you know, when I was in the Gulf I was […] attached to my residency. If my work is terminated there, so they have to cancel the- to cancel my residency. But here even you know if I am fired, nobody could say anything to me because I'm a British citizen. Nobody can ask me anything. I'm in a stronger position than- than I was in Kuwait.

Despite remaining 'loyal to the Kuwaitis' after arriving in the UK and organising 'big press conferences for them to defend their cause', Tayyib felt that his efforts and allegiance were rejected. For him, this was epitomised in the failure of anyone in Kuwait to protect the possessions he and Isabel were forced to leave behind or to return money they left in Kuwaiti bank accounts. The security of British citizenship and the tools it gives him to provide a future for his children and protect them from another upheaval are vitally important to him:

> I think, you know, we are more settled in England, more than any other place. Even I was offered a lot of jobs in the Gulf but, you know, I refused to go. Because first of all I don't want to repeat my experience, bad experience […] And second

> thing, you know, my priority now [is] for my children, to get them well-educated and that's it. And it's for this reason […] we want to retire here in England because, you know, the future for my children is here as well.

Tayyib's sense of belonging in the UK as a place is not, however, connected with a strong sense of belonging among a particular group of people. He says he felt at home with his in-laws, who have now passed away, as well as with other Palestinian families, although there are only a few in his area with whom he is in contact. Over their years in London, Tayyib and Isabel, who are both Muslim, have developed a circle of local Muslim friends with whom they hold monthly 'dish parties' at one another's houses. These can be quite large affairs, with several families attending and everyone bringing their own dish, hence the gathering's name. The purpose of these parties is to provide basic support for one another in family matters and advice guided by Islamic values. For the women, this is an opportunity to 'cook together and discuss their mothers' as well as marital issues: 'if one of them, you know, feel she is isolated or she needs help or has a problem with her husband, you know, they try to solve it'. Religion itself is not discussed and neither is politics, because people come from a range of Islamic and national backgrounds. Thus it is the broad tenets of Islamic culture and values that dominate discussions, particularly how to raise their children in a non-Muslim society:

> Because they are Muslims they discuss social and cultural matters and all what they face: how to bring [up] the children, what's the best school to send your children [to], what is the best way, you know, to teach maths or what is the best way to teach English or what is- you know, this is the matters. We don't teach, we don't talk about politics […] unless there is something big like Gaza […] because it's mainly cultural, yeah. Because maybe those living in India, they are not concerned about what is, you know, [going on] in [the] Middle East so we don't want to impose things […] the main thing is how to bring up children in the right way.

In this way, Tayyib's cultural identity as a Muslim is a stronger mode of belonging than the religious elements of Islam or national affiliations with Palestine or Kuwait, and it works in conjunction with his feelings about British citizenship. Although Tayyib feels that British citizenship secures England as his home once and for all, home is also continually (re)produced at these monthly dish parties. The support and advice provided by dish party friends is part of a collective way-finding within a non-Muslim

society, which is crucial to the care of the family, particularly children, and central to Tayyib's sense of home. His marriage to Isabel also appears to have had little effect on his feelings of home and identity. This is perhaps because they share crucial identity practices of language and religion, which diminishes the significance of other differences and enables them to share responsibility for Arabic-Muslim aspects of their children's upbringing.

Living with 'alienation'

Wadad Nasrallah and Tawfiq Al Mazini have lived in the south-east of England for over twenty years. Wadad comes from a small but well-known family in Nablus but spent parts of her childhood living in Afghanistan and Libya, where her father was working, before she came to Britain to attend boarding school. After completing her education, Wadad returned to Nablus for six years, where she met and married Tawfiq and returned to the UK with him. At the time, Tawfiq was working as an engineer for a company in London and had already been living in the UK for several years. The Al Mazinis are an established family in Tulkarm who fled to their relatives in Gaza in 1948, remaining there for several years before moving again to Egypt, where Tawfiq grew up and attended university. Tawfiq is one of five children in his family, all of whom are now scattered across Kuwait, Egypt and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, as well as nieces and nephews in North America. He describes his family as 'shattered', like a tree that has been dismembered and uprooted and another planted in its place. This is a metaphor that has personal and national significance, as well as literal relevance, for Tawfiq. He gave an example from when Israel captured the Sinai Peninsula in the 1967 war and uprooted palm trees from there, attempting to replant them in Haifa: 'But the tree never survive in Haifa. We survive. And we still survive'. For Tawfiq this story is a metaphor for the inevitable failure of the Zionist settlement project: outsiders cannot be transplanted into Palestinian soil. Thus for him the shattered tree of the Palestinian family and nation is not irrevocable, nor is their transplanted replacement a permanent fixture:

> This is the *Nakba*, the real *Nakba*. And people say the *Nakba* was [*inaudible*]. The real *Nakba* is also being shattered around the world and the Israelis I reckon they understand this […]. They understand that we have to return one day. If we don't, our children. If not our children, our grandchildren. But one day we shall return.

Here and elsewhere in our conversations Tawfiq moved easily between the intimate geographies of family and house and macro-level geopolitics and nationalistic metaphors because for him these things are inextricably linked. Indeed, he understands the ongoing Palestinian struggle as fundamentally about family dispersal, which shredded the Palestinian social and political fabric: 'The main thing is shattering the family. This is the main problem. People say: "It's the land. It's the land. It's the land." But the land cannot do without the family'. On a practical level, however, these shattered families remain to a certain extent held together by daily email and telephone contact, which provide co-presence and emotional succour over distance, as discussed in the previous chapter:

> We can't keep them together but we keep in touch, *hamdulilleh* [thanks be to God] […] we can't get [daily physical contact with family]. We can't afford it [*laughs*]. But we are in contact, maybe by email daily. Sometimes I get emails, two, three emails a day, you know, from my sisters, you know, one of them. And eh from my niece in Nablus, sometimes I get emails from her. But mostly it's the contact. I prefer to contact by word of mouth. It's better, you know, it's more-

Wadad is more fortunate insofar as her immediate family are less scattered than Tawfiq's: two of her siblings continue to live in Nablus and another in Saudi Arabia, while many other relatives live in Jordan. As such, Wadad has been able to visit her family annually for many years, often taking her sons, Saleem and Ghazi. This apparent mobility is not without its obstructions, however, as they have sometimes had to spend long hours at the Israeli-controlled border between Palestine and Jordan while the guards ease their boredom by questioning everything from the family's travel plans to the content of Saleem's politics degree course. This particular incident took place in 2006, during the war with Lebanon: 'they asked him "what subject are you studying?" The minute he said "politics" there were two people interrogating him'. Wadad says that, since Saleem was only seventeen at the time, this individual questioning was illegal. As such, the guards did not take him to a separate room, at which point Wadad would have 'raised a real fuss', but did move her away from her son 'so I couldn't tell him anything'. On top of this, the guards also questioned her about their reasons for stopping in Germany en route to Jordan rather than flying directly, using this as a

reason to temporarily confiscate their passports and airline tickets: 'And so they do little things. And there were only five of us on the border so they had plenty of time'.

Wadad had worried that this experience would make Saleem reluctant to return to Palestine, but it seems to have had the opposite effect: since then he has become 'very interested in the Palestinian issue […] always looking things up'. However, she attributes Saleem's new political interest not just to this incident but also to a more general awareness that comes with age, something which her younger son, Ghazi, has yet to develop:

> Lots of times before we went [Saleem] was quite young, I mean seven or eight. Not aware at all. And other times we just met the family in Jordan. […] The younger one [Ghazi], it didn't affect him at all. At all. He didn't swing either way: he didn't like it or dislike it. He was very neutral. Um at the time he was fifteen so I don't know if it was an age thing or what. This time around it'll be interesting to see because he's seventeen […] so it will be interesting to see how he sees it, views it from that point. Before when we were stopped at checkpoints to him it was an inconvenience [but] with the older one it was his right that was taken away from him. It was completely different outlook on things.

Although incidents such as the one in 2006 are difficult for her as a mother, they also reinforce her own resolve to continue to visit Palestine, rather than bowing to what she sees as Israel's deliberate strategy of alienation:

> Wadad: I think their whole idea is for us not to go back, I think this is what they want, they don't want people, especially younger generations, [to] keep going back and visiting and getting attached to the land and the people and the-
>
> Joanna: Is this very important for you as a family to make these visits even though it's difficult?
>
> Wadad: Oh yes, very important. And I feel it's important for the boys as well.

Thus for both Wadad and Tawfiq, the politics of diasporic family overlap with the politics of Palestine itself, albeit in slightly different ways: while Tawfiq reads the resilience of his 'shattered' family as prophetic metaphor of ultimate Palestinian victory, Wadad feels that the act of visiting is as much about keeping in touch with her relatives as it is about resisting Israeli intimidation and alienation. In contrast to other participants, however, their sense of connection with and belonging to Palestine was not experienced simultaneously with a sense of belonging in Britain. Rather, Tawfiq and Wadad often expressed a sense of distance and difference between how they led

their lives and the currents of mainstream British society. In doing so, they conform to Arab tendencies to perceive 'British' and 'Arab' cultures in opposition (Nagel 2001).

In addition to the stories of neighbourly tension discussed in chapter four, Tawfiq recounted two incidents that, for him, summed up his treatment in Britain and therefore his lack of real affection for it as a place. The first took place in the late-1990s when his mother was planning to visit him from Egypt. Tawfiq sent a letter inviting her to visit, as required in order for her to obtain a visa. The British consulate in Cairo later called her to say that the street address Tawfiq had given did not exist, so she returned with a map that Tawfiq then sent her. Every subsequent time she went to enquire about her application, the consulate said it was ongoing or would request apparently superfluous information, such as her son's age. Tawfiq was outraged by the inefficiency and the fact that his elderly mother was being forced to make exhausting and pointless trips across the city, and he took a day off work to visit the Foreign Office. When he explained the problem to the clerk, she apparently rolled her eyes and said 'oh God, immigrants', after which he sought an audience with her supervisor and demanded that they make a decision and stop inconveniencing an elderly woman. His mother was eventually granted a visa but the damage was already done: 'How can you feel that you are part of the community if this is the treatment that you get? Is this fair?' The second incident Tawfiq described took place at work and concerned his annual appraisal, which he one day happened to see. On it he read that his employers found him to be a capable worker, smartly dressed, articulate and a trustworthy representative of the company. However, towards the end there was a question regarding his suitability to becoming a manager and his supervisor had written: 'Yes, but Mr Al Mazini was born in Egypt from a Palestinian family and he has hard feeling against Israel'. The irrelevance of this comment, as well as the audacity given Britain's history in Palestine, stung Tawfiq:

> When you see such a thing at work, [which has] nothing to do with Israel, what would you think? How would you feel as part of this society? […] As I told you, we were British when the British were in Palestine, but when they left Palestine we became refugees, yeah? Now when you are British back again because you are working here and paying the taxes and so on and settling here, temporary until you go home, this is the treatment you get from colleagues.

For Wadad, the alienation she felt in Britain was more of a cultural issue than the result of discriminatory institutional experiences such as Tawfiq's. 'I don't feel excluded

from the British community,' she said, 'but I don't particularly feel I belong to it. I don't think there are enough similarities to belong'. The similarities that she feels are lacking are broad ones concerning ways of life and values, which means that she does not feel entirely 'comfortable' in Britain. A key illustrative example for Wadad is the differences between how she would deal with death and the way her neighbours do. She described an occasion a few months prior to our second conversation when two people on the street died within a fortnight of one another and neither she nor Tawfiq knew about it.

> Nobody bothered to come and say "so and so's passed away" and only because Tawfiq said to the next-door neighbour "oh I haven't seen so and so walk" and he said "oh he just died." "Did he? When?" "Oh, last week." And yet again you didn't see- I mean, when somebody dies in our culture, you can see a lot of people coming to the house, so you know there's something so you go over and you ask if they need help or anything. Again nobody came, so I mean obviously they didn't have an open house or whatever, I don't know how they deal with funerals or things here, but nothing, nothing indicated that anything was happening in that house. Which is shocking, I really found that shocking. […] So we did ask [our neighbour], "if something like this happens, let us know." I don't know how she found out, that's the other thing. It might be through church.

For Wadad, the apparent invisibility of death on the street is bound up in part with what she sees as a general lack of neighbourly communication (discussed in chapter four) and possibly also socio-religious networks of local news: no-one knocked on her door to let her know and, as a Muslim, Wadad does not attend church, where she might learn of a neighbour's death and of others' plans to acknowledge this in the appropriate way. However, her comment that 'I don't know how they deal with funerals or things here' also suggests a lack of understanding for British cultures surrounding death, cultures which appear to contrast profoundly with the practices she and Tawfiq find familiar and comforting:

> Tawfiq: when my mum passed away we had here about over maybe forty people came in the house. Even people we don't know. People we don't know, we've never seen. They still came to do condolences.
>
> Joanna: So do you just have an open house when something like this happens?
>
> Wadad: Yeah
>
> Joanna: And do they- were they friends of friends or-?
>
> Wadad: Yeah people tell people, "we're going to so and so's because she's just lost her mother-in-law, her mother" or whatever, and so they would want to pay respects because that's what they would do at home

Joanna: Even though they don't personally know you, they would still come.

Wadad: No, they still want to come and share your grief regardless if they know you or not. They just want to show that they're supporting you. So people carry through their customs regardless if they know you or not […] because everybody's involved. People bring food for the people who just lost- um are going through the bereavement so they don't have to think about food. So everybody's involved, the whole community's involved, whether it's a death or a wedding or a birth. They'll do the same if there's a newborn baby, somebody will cook and bring over the food. So everybody's involved, whether you like it or not, they're involved. Which in a way is very nice. And they'll organise things for you and they will- you know, they just want you to sit and grieve and that's all you have to do.

Wadad feels that this is not necessarily a Palestinian, Arab or Islamic practice, but simply a non-British one. She gave the example of visiting a Scottish woman who was grieving for her husband, who was Algerian. She had not met this woman previously but was visiting with a friend to pay their respects. They found the house full of the woman's friends and neighbours, all of whom were foreign – not only Arabs and north-Africans, but other Europeans as well: 'they just carried their culture with them and so they felt they had to go over and see and be there for her'. To summarise, Tawfiq and Wadad experience and resist alienation in several ways. In one sense there is a distancing from Palestine that comes with being part of a scattered family and is experienced during problematic border crossings, which are resisted by unending belief in one day returning (Tawfiq) and by continuing to visit (Wadad). In another sense, however, they are distanced from British society through what they saw as discriminatory encounters with governmental and professional bureaucracy and unfamiliar cultures of neighbourliness, particularly around death. They resist these by either confronting the prejudiced bureaucratic system or forging relationships with people who share their values and practices regardless of nationality or religion.

These experiences and opinions contrast with both Fu'ad and Tayyib's senses of Britain as their place in the world by virtue of a religious calling and a secure family future. For Fu'ad in particular, this attachment to Britain includes rather than excludes a simultaneous attachment to Palestine, as it is precisely through his position here that he has re-connected politically and emotionally with Palestine. Tayyib, however, can be seen to share Wadad's desire to construct a familiar social and cultural environment through the forum of their 'dish parties', which provides the social reinforcement of their own values not available within a wider non-Muslim society. All of these stories

raise issues about culture and belonging, about the intersections and divergences between various kinds of national, spiritual and cultural affiliations, and therefore about the politics of diasporic identity for Palestinians in Britain. I explore these things in more detail in the next section, beginning with how Arabic language facilitates overlapping cultural, religious and social belonging, before moving on to explore more 'personal communities' of honorary family forged through domestic intimacy and the symbolic 'adoption' of British political activists as honorary Palestinians.

Overlapping identities

Recently, Alexander et al (2007) have sought to challenge abstract versions of 'community' as a collective identification and redirect attention to the ways in which groups are forged through networks of friends, families and neighbourhoods. These 'personal communities' are 'lived through embedded networks of individual, family and group histories, trajectories and experiences that belie dominant representations and discourses […] [and that are] linked and performed through ties of emotion, trust and security' (Alexander et al 2007, 788). According to the authors, gender, age, migration history and personality are key to the creation of networks and collective belongings but in ways that cut across and reformulate (rather simply discard) 'conventional' notions of community along national, cultural and religious lines. Foregrounding these situated and variously permanent 'ties between people' challenges 'abstract "imagined" narratives of "community" and cultural identity', while not dismissing the enduring importance of bounded notions of collective identity (Alexander et al 2007, 797; see also Alleyne 2002).

In this section, I explore the various 'personal communities' constructed by Palestinians living in Britain; the situated lifeworlds which draw upon but also complicate hegemonic notions of identity. I take language as my starting point because this was seen by some participants (often parents) as mapping neatly onto familial, cultural and religious belonging. As discussed in chapter five, language is an agent of collective identity (re)production as well as of communication, particularly among second generation migrants. Although key authors in this field, such as Portes and Rumbaut, present language as bounded and as straightforwardly corresponding with 'nationality', they do emphasise that the inflections and accents within a language also

generates a 'sense of "we-ness"' that is linked to a shared culture and history (2001, 113). As also discussed earlier, Arabic takes several different forms, each relating to different spiritual, intellectual and geographical communities: Qur'anic or classical Arabic; modern standard Arabic (*fus'ħa*) used in international Arabic television programmes and news media; geographically specific colloquial Arabic (*ămiyeh*). However, the relationship between language and group belonging is much more complicated in practice, as it operates in conjunction with personalities and friendships to construct different kinds of collective identity that relate to but also go beyond Palestine.

Language, culture and religion

As discussed in the previous chapter, the politics of language-learning figures in everyday domestic and family life for many participants. Although not all parents chose to teach their children Arabic, many felt that it was a particularly vital conduit for cultural, familial, spiritual and Palestinian belonging, and for these reasons it was important to instil Arabic language in their children from a young age:

> Joanna: and how important are things like language and religion to your sense of heritage?
>
> Tawfiq: very important. Very important. We taught our children Arabic, we taught them our religion. And I reckon we are here as a passing phase through this life and the next life is the eternal life. So it's very important that they have been brought up as Muslims and as uh, you know, talking, learning Arabic and learning our culture because without language you don't have a culture, so they have both cultures now, this culture and Arabic culture […]
>
> Wadad: they always spoke Arabic, they always- everything we did was very Arabic. The food we ate, the traditions we have, everything we was very Arabic. Even the house, the furniture it was all very Arabic and Palestinian, so it was important that they identified themselves, maybe not when they were very young but when they grew up [*inaudible*] they knew that although they are British, they also are Arabs at that stage. We made it as an Arab rather than just specifically Palestinian because we're also the only family, Palestinian family here so they had nobody to really to relate to […] I was worried that they might feel they didn't belong, because they had nobody else to relate to. So I thought if they were brought up as Arabs, there are lots of other Arab nationalities out there, they were one of them. So it's more for a sense of belonging.

However, Wadad and Tawfiq's commitment to language extended beyond the domestic enforcement of *ămiyeh* to the setting up of a weekend Arabic language school when their sons were in their first years of primary school, in order for them to learn

fus'ħa and Qur'anic Arabic. It began with a class of around twelve, which consisted of their own sons and the children of Wadad and Tawfiq's friends, but has grown over the years to a student body of one hundred and fifty, ranging from small children to teenagers. The school also has some adult students, often people married to Arabs or Muslims who may be in the process of religious conversion or simply wanting to engage with their partner's background. Although the main driving force for Tawfiq was the desire to teach children to read the Qur'an, actually getting them to understand the Qur'an (rather than just memorise it) meant teaching *fus'ħa* as well. As such, pupils now work towards GSCE Arabic in addition to their lessons on the Qur'an, with no student being put forward for the exam unless they are capable of receiving top marks. This insistence upon academic excellence is part of the wider 'Arabic' ethos of the school, which emphasises discipline and respect that are seen to be lacking in the British school system (see Nagel 2001):

> Tawfiq: I'm very strict, you know. So if anything occur in [the classroom], you know, they will not have a break at the break time. They will stay. That's how I manage to- and of course they come to play and they come to do- you know, so-
>
> Joanna: bigger part of it for them. It's the learning but it's also the social aspect.
>
> Tawfiq: and learning the discipline I think because I found, you know, with most of the schools here, I mean in the English schools, there is no discipline actually. You know, neither of my children, I haven't seen them, you know, having discipline at school. I mean, compared to private schools. I'm comparing [to] where I learned.
>
> […]
>
> Wadad: Discipline is a big part of it, respecting adults and each other. Um, achievements, we kind of emphasise- all of us have one thing in common is that we, I wouldn't say push but we really actively encourage that they achieve the best that they can, in everything. Especially academically. Islamic values, we all share that. You know, right from wrong. What we are allowed to do, what we aren't.

Thus through language, Wadad and Tawfiq's Arabic school draws together religious understanding, Arabic principles of education and shared cultural and moral values of respect, achievement, right and wrong, without aligning with any particular sect or way of practising Islam. This broad approach seems to be an important factor in the school's success, as it contrasts with the narrow nationalistic focus of other, smaller Arabic schools in the area:

> Wadad: there's loads of schools in this area […] [the nearest town] has at least twelve but they all tend to be um maybe six children in the school [*laughs*]. They are not- I tried once with somebody from the council to bring them all under one umbrella and they said to us- well, it didn't work because they tended to make their schools more, not Arabic but their own nationality. So it would be a Somali school, it would be a Kenyan school, and they weren't willing to go under one umbrella to make it into an *Arabic* school and then get funding and all the rest of it. So it didn't work. But um people come to us because we're very broad in what we teach. Tawfiq's very strict, so they want discipline, which is a very Arabic thing that discipline is important. And we get very good results with our GCSEs.

The pupils at Wadad and Tawfiq's school come from a diverse range of geographical and ethnic backgrounds, including Kenya, Malaysia, Finland and the Netherlands, Arab, Asian and mixed families. Indeed, Wadad and Tawfiq recounted the story of a passer-by who commented on the model of happy multiculturalism that is visible in the playground. This is the kind of environment that Ilfat and Isma'il were looking for when they decided to send Maryam and her brothers to a Saturday Arabic school. At first they tried a school run by Yemenis in their local area but the chaotic environment and haphazard teaching quickly led them to look further afield:

> Ilfat: I took them half a day and that was it. Didn't take them back. Didn't. Started taking them to [another city]. It was very unpleasant […] children are wild, the teachers are wild [*chuckles*]. I just didn't think it's a good environment […] It was just not good, I didn't feel comfortable with it, you know.
>
> Joanna: so what was better about the [other] school?
>
> Ilfat: teachers are more, I think, more normal [*laughs*] […] I think more trained to be teachers. I think in the Yemeni school anybody- they just pick- picked few people who are not actually experienced in teaching but in [the other school] the teachers were proper teachers and their community was um rich […] not only Yemenis, it had all sorts of, you know- from every country. Very rich Arab, you know, background. Egyptian, Syrian, Lebanese, Palestinian, you know, all of these [*inaudible*] Moroccan. Everybody. So it was in that sense nicer, yeah.

Noura and Zaki attended the same Arabic school as Maryam and her brothers, and for their father, Faruq, the Arabic school was actually a key factor in moving to the area:

> Faruq: if you go to other small towns you will not find Arabic schools there, but [here] there's a large Arabic community
>
> Noura: I didn't realise that.
>
> Faruq: You have been to Arabic school

> Noura: pardon? I went to an Arab school. I didn't think you moved somewhere, you thought 'ok, where are there Arabic schools?' [and] you moved there. I just didn't think that was a factor you thought of.
>
> Faruq: yes. It was one of the major factors.

Faruq's and Ilfat's desires for their children's linguistic upbringing did not, however, necessarily coincide with their children's own desires for their Saturday mornings. Ilfat described struggling to get her three children out of bed and out of the house to get to the school on time, but she persisted because she and her husband felt very strongly that the children would appreciate it later on in life. Maryam likened the experience to the film *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* (Zwick 2002), in which the main character negotiates her Greek-American upbringing. Maryam particularly identified with the trauma of having 'weird food' in her lunchbox at her English school and then also having extra school on Saturdays, forcing her and her brothers to miss all the Saturday morning television that their English friends would be talking about on Monday: 'We *always* missed out because of Arabic school and you'd go into school [and say] "oh I didn't watch it, I had to learn Arabic"'. Despite resenting it at the time, Maryam made some of her closest and oldest friends at this Arabic school and has also grown to appreciate her ability to speak Arabic, as her parents said she would:

> When I was little I was like the only brown kid in school and you sort of, like, you know you're different and you have- you know, you have to go to Arabic school and learn Arabic and all that sort of stuff and all you wanted to do was be the same as everyone else at that age. Whereas by the time I got into high school I was like "yeah, you know, I'm Arab, Palestinian. We go and visit Palestine." And, you know, all of that sort of thing. And you get- you just become more comfortable with it and proud of who you are, rather than when you're a lot younger and you're just like "I don't speak Arabic. No, no. I speak English" [*laughs*].

Zaki was a similarly reluctant student when he was younger, but now in his mid-teens he relishes it because his friends are there and they are discovering together the pleasures of understanding Arabic. It is partly this shared experience that connects him to his friends from other Arab backgrounds, but learning Arabic also opens up cultural differences within his Arab circle, differences that bring them closer together through the very mixing of languages, accents and cultures: 'That's where all my close friends [are], we all met up at Arabic school and learnt other cultures through Arabic school'.

Zaki therefore derives a particularly strong sense of community from the Arabic school, much more so than Noura, who felt that her class was less socially cohesive and so no-one bothered to keep in touch after they left.

Reflecting on the importance of Arabic school in her children's social lives, Ilfat went further to suggest that shared social practices and cultures of family meant that the children forged stronger connections with Arabic school friends than with their English counterparts:

> Ilfat: [*To Maryam*] when you were young […] you were saying with Yusuf and how different you sometimes feel the bond with friends from Arabic school and friends from the English school. You feel bonded more with the children from the Arabic school. […] And I said "really, that is really strange. Why is that? What is the reason that it's happening you feel more bonded, even though you go to the English school everyday, to the Arabic school just once a week." So, Yusuf said […] he thinks that the way- because Arabic culture is a little bit more expressive emotionally. People show their- you know, it's just how things are, you know, like, I don't know, the, when you greet, you meet, normally you just hug each other. You are just more like a family instantly because this is how they feel [and] treat each other within the culture and there is no- there isn't a barrier, or you know the reservation of, you know, being a little bit keeping a distance. And Yusuf said it appeared that children just pick it up and mimic their parents, the Arabic culture. Then with their Arab friends, they react together as they see the others do together. With the English friends they can't be the same because in the English culture is not- there isn't this openness all the time, there is some kind of uh space always. This was his explanation. I don't know how you feel [Maryam]
>
> Maryam: [*inaudible*] yeah, I think as well [*inaudible*] family connection, because outside of school you socialise a lot more like as a family group, you know, with other Arab friends as a family. I mean, I've been to my English friends' houses as well [*inaudible*] but in terms of the whole family-
>
> Ilfat: but like school friends, you didn't keep them as you kept your friends from the Arabic school. You met new friends in the university, but are you in touch with school friends now?
>
> Maryam: [*inaudible*] but because they've sort of scattered, I think Arabic school friends are all still [*inaudible*]
>
> Ilfat: lumped together [*laughs*]
>
> Maryam: no-one's gone anywhere but school friends have gone all over the place. So you don't see them because they're in, you know, in Scotland and all over […] I think here isn't it the culture, you move away to university, whereas Arabs don't do that. They stay at home for university, for the most part, so most of my Arab friends they're still staying in the area. Whereas when I left [my English] school everyone went everywhere.

The strength of the relationship between Ilfat and Maryam and their Arabic school friends thus seems to come down to the multiplicity of the bonds between them: they are bound by Arabic customs of physical contact and family-based socialising, *as well as* by children's sense of cultural continuity in following their parents' behaviour and the practical continuity of their friendships through remaining in one place. In this way, Arabic language learning and Saturday schooling enable intersections between cultural, religious and social belonging. There are, however, other intersections of identity at work here, which operate at larger, more abstract scales: intersections of Arabic, Islam and Palestine.

Among participants, the importance of Islam arose from the demands of raising children with particular spiritual tools for life as well as from the religious significance of Palestine: al-Haram al-Sharif in Jerusalem is the third holiest site in Islam, after Mecca and Medina, as it is where Muhammad ascended to heaven and is the first direction to which Muslims prayed before Mecca (Khalidi 1997). Tawfiq explained the centrality of Islam to his responsibilities as a father and as a Palestinian:

> Before we got married, I explained to Wadad that it's very important to raise our children as Muslims […] Islam is the answer for every problem basically, economical problem, hardship. If they have the faith then they will succeed in life. If they don't have the faith, they don't succeed […] in this life and the next. This life is short. […] I would like [my sons] to marry a good Muslim girl. Palestinian would be preferable but if she can bring [up] the children and raise them as good Muslims, it's more important for me, you know, to raise them as good Muslims, because that is what counts. And of course Palestinian. If you are a Muslim you will feel for Palestine, because it's the first uh direction there- where Muslims have prayed or our Prophet has prayed from. And it's the third *masjid* [mosque] you know that we are called to [*inaudible*] and that you *have* to visit. So it's very important.

This emphasis on women's role in raising children and instilling values contrasts with how he and Wadad have shared responsibility for their sons' spiritual upbringing and inadvertently devalues his own contribution to his sons' religious education via the Arabic school they run. However, the main point here is that Islamic and Palestinian identities are seen as fundamentally intertwined, more than for Christian Palestinians, although the reason for this remains obscure: 'you'll find a lot of the Muslim um Palestinians, religion is very much tied within their Palestinian identity […] there is obviously a lot of religion tied to [Christianity] but not as strong as the- the Muslims'.

While the views of the two Christian participants in this research are not sufficient to challenge this view, it may be said that for them the relationship between Palestine and religion was quite different and sometimes ambivalent. As discussed in the previous chapter, Jameel regards the biblical significance of Palestine as quite separate from contemporary politics. Fu'ad, in contrast, felt a more direct connection between his religion and his politics through his calling to the ministry and his diasporic duty to raise British public awareness about Palestine.

In a similar way to Wadad and Tawfiq, Ilyas Haniyyah felt that Islam provided an important guide in raising his children that they could either take or leave later on in life:

> Religion has been a very important [*inaudible*] in our lives [*inaudible*], in our identity, our roots. And also to keep us happy because we are convinced that religion actually is for our happiness in this world and the world to come. And it's, you know, as I taught my daughters to eat wholemeal [bread] and proper food and not to get fat. I think it is also- it makes a lot of sense to teach them my ways and when they are older and they go, they are free. Then if I was wrong they have the choice but I cannot leave them open-ended to, you know, do whatever or not. I need to teach them what I believe and then it's up to them.

Ilyas lamented the growing refusal in 'Western culture' to impose religion upon children: 'why you leave the child to choose? Come on. You don't even leave him to choose when he sleeps and when he gets up and how he dresses and how he eats. So why you want to leave him without, you know, confused without any religion?' Rather Ilyas felt Islam offered positive guidance for his children in respecting other religions (because Moses and Jesus are prophets within Islam) and behaving well to one's neighbour. As such, Ilyas felt that Islam was part of his 'family roots' and the general socio-religious lifestyle, routine or tradition in which he himself was raised. These Islamic roots of family are bound up with Palestinian national and political identities for reasons similar to those given by Tawfiq. As Ilyas's daughter, Liana, and his wife, Nawal, explained:

> Liana: I think maybe why, why it's [*inaudible*] why it's connected to your roots is because in religion there is a lot of fundamentals about like, Palestine is important even in our religion […] Basically in religion, it's important to- our country is important in religion as well. [*inaudible*] in Palestine [*inaudible*] part of our religion's [*inaudible*] Jerusalem and everything, so I think that's why it brings you back to the roots and because you shouldn't just think "oh", you know, "I'm

> Palestinian." It's "I'm a Muslim. He's a Muslim. It doesn't matter [if] they're from Pakistan, he's from Bangladesh, whatever. We're all Muslims." So it kind of- it gives you identity as well.
>
> Nawal: all the Muslims they care about uh Palestine […] all the Muslims, if you talk to them it makes them emotional and they care.

Ilyas took this Muslim ethic of care for Palestine further by saying that the *umma* (the global community of believers in Islam) provided a critical mass for Palestine, more so than pan-Arabism which could actually weaken Palestinian claims for statehood, and more than political labels, such as communist or socialist, which do not carry the emotional weight of religion:

> Ilyas: it does strengthen the Palestinian cause. If you take Islam away from Palestine then the people who care about Palestine will become less. If it is related to Islam then you have 1.3 billion potential people, you know, population of Muslims who will care one way or the other. Yeah, you know, ok maybe [*inaudible*] in different ways. If you take Islam away and saying the Palestinians are Arabs- that's why, if you look into the literature, Israelis always refer to the Palestinians as Arabs, Arabs, Arabs. And to be honest we didn't like it because what we mean perhaps-
>
> Liana: they're trying to take away the Palestinian identity.
>
> Ilyas: so they trying to take-
>
> Liana: merge with the other countries.
>
> Ilyas: […] exactly so they want to put you- you know, they [say], "you're not Palestinian so you're an Arab so you can go to Syria or you go to Saudi or Egypt and you know leave the country for us." But also there is another angle to look at that, when they say "an Arab" then it is the Palestinian cause should be cared for by the Arabs, which are let's say three hundred or three hundred and fifty million with twenty-two odd Arab countries. But if you take that away and say the Palestinians should manage their own problem then it becomes even smaller. It becomes in the hands of, I don't know, twelve million Palestinians across the world and if you- you can do even better, I mean from the Israeli point of view and the West who want to marginalise the Palestinians, say "forget your land, keep it for the Israelis, you know, they don't have anywhere else to go" etcetera. Then they say "you are, you know, you live in Britain, so why should you care? You know, you have a job. You have a home. You have a even a nationality. Leave it to those in the West Bank or in Gaza or wherever" so they want-
>
> Joanna: shrink. Shrink the support.
>
> Ilyas: shrink, exactly. So if I may say, going back to roots […] so I'm saying that being a Muslim will strengthen the position of Palestine and the Palestinians rather than being a communist or being a socialist or whoever.

Thus, for Ilyas, Islam internationalises the Palestinian cause in a way that strengthens it, by arithmetic and argument: there are more Muslims in the world than Arabs; religion can evoke profound emotional responses to events in Palestine that might lead to political action, whereas pan-Arabism can play into Zionist arguments that Palestinians can be at home anywhere in the Arab world. Moreover, Islam is seen here to defend a specifically Palestinian identity and the right of those in diaspora to maintain their attachment to Palestine. The *umma* is being invoked here more as a vision or an ideal than a practice, in the sense that all Muslims do not necessarily support Palestine but they 'ought to' (Schmidt 2005). As Tawfiq said, 'but now the Muslims are sleeping, one day they will wake up'. Noura, however, argued against wedding Islam and Palestine because it undermines the ways in which Christian and Jewish Palestinians have also borne the brunt of Zionist colonisation and Israeli occupation.

The macro-level way in which participants spoke about Islam suggested a more abstracted sense of group belonging than felt among Arabs. Islam conjured a global sense of belonging among the *umma*, which coalesced around Palestine and was concretised in the rituals of daily life, but said much less about participants' interpersonal relationships than their experiences of Saturday Arabic school and cultural belonging. In the next section I pursue these issues of abstract and material identities and collective belongings further through more obviously 'personal communities' that have been forged through neighbourly closeness and political solidarity, and that are articulated through the language of kinship.

Friendship, 'kinship' and solidarity

Of the 'communities' actively created by participants, it was the small-scale, kin-like relationships of 'honorary family' which came across as most significant, possibly because they ameliorate the distress of losing family through migration (Alexander et al 2007). The Haniyyahs in particular described the powerful connection they felt with another family they knew in Sheffield: 'to us they're more than family', said Liana.[16] They are knitted together at all levels: 'my dad is best friends with the father and my mum is best friends with the mother and Liana is best friends with the daughter and

[16] See also chapter four, 'Oh they have a key, too?'

Mai's best friends with the son, so yeah it's quite close', said Alifa. However, rather than these friendships being 'like kin' or 'close to but different from kin', Ilyas these described his relationship with Hani as 'closer than blood' because they were chosen and not given:

> Ilyas: I mean, Hani, for example, I think that he's closer than my brother, my blood brother. I really feel that. Of course I have obligations when it comes to my blood brother and of course we are very close but […] because it did not come through my blood, you know, I picked [Hani] and he picked me, then the relationship is very much stronger.

The family in question are a Syrian-Lebanese couple with two daughters and two sons who now live in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Ilyas and the other man, Hani, met at Sheffield University where they both worked. Hani invited Ilyas and his family over one evening and the two families clicked. The next thing they knew, Hani and his wife, Sa'ida, were looking to leave their house on the other side of town and move closer to their new friends: 'even by that time we did not know them that well but they made an effort to be two minutes away from us and gradually you know we started to become [close]', said Ilyas. It seems that several forces working together began to bond the families together, beginning with how Sa'ida and Nawal's daily lives became interwoven because they lived so close to one another, as well as through their shared experiences of pregnancy:

> Nawal: she bought a house near my house
>
> Alifa: on purpose
>
> Nawal: so we can be together. We did everything for the children together.
>
> […]
>
> Liana: because then the mums started, you know, to take us to school together because their oldest daughter is just a year younger than me, so- and then we'd play with each other. And then my mum was pregnant with Mai at the same time that their mum was pregnant with one of the boys and so they were struggling through the pregnancy, helping each other, you know.

In addition, Liana felt that the cultural and religious connections between the two families played a significant part in helping them feel at home with these people and in Britain more widely, although Alifa felt that mysterious, personal chemistry was also

involved, as they meet many other families at Eid and Ramadan but do not automatically become close with them:

> Ilyas: we know a lot of people and uh but the people who we dedicate time to visit are not very many because you have to be picky and choosy uh because you know so many […] so many people you can't have everyone at the same level. There are functions that you meet many families at the same time you know, during Eid, during Ramadan, during some special occasion. Anyway, a few times we visited them and they visited us and then the next thing we heard that they were looking for a house to buy in the neighbourhood […] and gradually, you know, we started to become-
>
> Liana: because we live in a country where we feel stranger to it and then because they're also Arabs and they're Muslims, there's some, you know, connection.
>
> Nawal: culture very similar.
>
> Liana: and so it helps, you feel, you feel more at home when you have somebody that you can share [*inaudible*].
>
> Alifa: I think you just connect sometimes with some people, don't you? Just some people that you connect with and some people you can like but you just don't have that. Sometimes you don't know why you just click with some people.

The closeness that Ilyas, Nawal and their daughters feel with this other family is partly born out of mundane practices of kin relatedness. As discussed in chapter four, the couples would help one another resolve their marital disputes and treated one another's houses as their own. Also, when Alifa got married, Hani was working in the Emirates but he came over for two days simply to attend her wedding: 'he came straight from the airport to the wedding', she laughed. Similarly, when Hani's mother was dying in hospital in the Emirates, Ilyas travelled to be with the family from where he was working in Kuwait. Hani's brother was not able to get there in time and so Ilyas helped his friend to perform the last rites and to organise her funeral.

As discussed earlier, it is this kind of support during times of grief and celebration as well as more mundane practices of proximate living and domestic familiarity which are key to meaningful kinship relations (see Edwards and Strathern 2000). Indeed, Alifa and her sisters refer to Sa'ida as their *imm a'roħi*, which can be translated as 'soul mother', 'spirit mother' or 'mother of my heart'. Furthermore, Hani and Sa'ida even went so far as to name Nawal and Ilyas as legal guardians of their children should anything happen to them, despite Hani having a sister in Lebanon and a brother also living in Sheffield. However, the almost tangible feeling of love that came through as they described their kin relationships with this family should not be over-romanticised,

as they are built as much on tolerating nuisance as they are on mutual affection (see previous chapter, 'Family was taken from us'):

> Ilyas: if you look at the both families, we are very different. I am, as a father, very different in my approach towards my kids [*Nawal laughs*] than him because […] we are very fussy about how we bring up our children, discipline and things like that. Their children, they were all over the place. They were noisy, they were naughty, they were out of control and the dad he never cared, you know. He wouldn't say no to anything. And he was exactly the opposite from me […] [*to Nawal*] I don't think that you [and Sa'ida] are very similar to each other […]
>
> Nawal: but that's what makes close
>
> Ilyas: but maybe with the- and I used to say to- to uh- to treat their kids as if they were mine. Sometimes say "don't do that!" and they never mind
>
> Nawal: and they love you, Ilyas, so much. Now when he is here, he says "please we miss our father. Come and see us"
>
> Ilyas: yeah and I go. I was very strict with them when they were little kids now they are at university. They love me! [*laughs*] I don't know why! [*laughs*]
>
> Alifa: and my dad was just saying that their kids are so terrible, if it was anyone else we wouldn't be friends with them!
>
> [*laughter*]
>
> Ilyas: that's right
>
> Alifa: if we didn't love their parents so much we wouldn't let them set foot in our house!

In this way friendships can function as a kind of community or pseudo-family through mutual support and shared culture (Alexander et al 2007). For the Haniyyahs, an initial spark of connection between the two families quickly followed by physical proximity led to the entanglement of their daily practical and emotional lives, and a kind of intimacy assumed to be more frequently found among kin (see previous chapter). However, these relationships are shaped by momentous as well as mundane acts, including flying across the world to be present at important family occasions. The result is an unconditional bond (they have no choice but to love this family, including their terribly-behaved children) which was itself established through choice ('I picked [Hani] and he picked me').

The Al Rimawis had also developed a personal sense of community among solidarity activists that was similarly articulated in kin-like terms but with different implications for identity and belonging among different members of the family. As the most politically active family in this research, the Al Rimawis placed greatest emphasis

on the support for Palestine which they felt from British people from a wide range of backgrounds. In contrast to the intangible global family of Muslims who are expected to be concerned for Palestine, this solidarity group provides material evidence of political support that keeps the Al Rimawis motivated. 'We don't feel, Palestinians, as we are standing on our own,' said Faruq, 'we have a lot of support from other communities and other societies within UK and that would give us really a great sense of help, support and uh and satisfaction really that you are not in the field on our own. There are a lot of people with us'. Within the family, however, the significance of this solidarity took different forms. For Zaki, for example, his political involvement was mainly articulated through his friendships with other young Arab and Muslim men. He feels more comfortable with this group because they share culture, language and religion – 'we're able to do more stuff' – whereas the lack of understanding and cultural commonality between himself and English school-friends means that they are not as involved in each other's lives and there is no shared concern for Palestine:

> I don't think I really belong with more the British community […] because it's like they don't believe what I believe in. To be honest they don't really know that much about Palestine and things like that, so and then they're not, and they don't mix with the Islamic community.

Zaki's older sister, Noura, however, felt that her Palestinian activism had less to do with religion because few Muslim women her age are as politically involved as she, which forecloses shared identifications with Islam *as well as* Palestine and means that she looks elsewhere for her sense of group belonging. Perhaps more importantly, however, Noura seemed to have a particularly acute sense of in-between-ness as a Palestinian in Britain and she therefore feels more at home in a diverse group of people such as that which comprises the solidarity movement. She says that she 'looks back at Palestinians in Palestine' and feels different from them but neither does she fit in with British culture: 'You're sort of lost in the middle somewhere: you're not full British, you're not full Palestinian, you're just in the middle and therefore you become friends with everyone like that'. In Noura's view, to be 'lost in the middle' in this way is not to occupy a space of fear and insecurity but an opportunity for hybrid identities across a range of positions. It's a 'new mix' that includes (and through that inclusion it exceeds) being British, Palestinian, Muslim, Arab, Christian and so on, because the very thing

that is shared and which binds people together is the multiplicity of identities within and between each of them: 'The new mix cannot identify with one single thing because we're all multi-cultural'.

As such, Noura's belonging to this multi-cultural group of solidarity activists contributes to a sense of home for her, both in terms of honouring her identification with Palestine by making a difference through activism and in terms of complimenting her multiple self-identities:

> Noura: because the community I identify with works for the solidarity, you know, with Palestine. It helps me become more active, therefore feel like I've helped to achieve something for the Palestinians, maybe not now but for the future. So it helps me identity myself within my Palestinian heritage, my Palestinian roots but because it's working within a multicultural background it also helps identify me in my other capacity sort of as British, so it's quite complex, I think.
>
> Joanna: is it kind of a bridging thing in a way?
>
> Noura: it is, yeah. It is little, little bits of everything coming together to build who I am and who I identify myself with. So my activities will help me identify myself not as just one person but because I'm a mixture of different people, come together into one, so they all come together and it mixes into a ball.
>
> Joanna; so is that why solidarity community is more important because it allows you to be lots of different people at the same time?
>
> Noura: yes, because I don't feel that I'm one full person, I don't identify myself as one full person. With the solidarity, because we've got the Palestinians, we've got the Muslims, the Christians, the British, the Europeans, from all over the world, and also Arabs and, of course, Palestinians and that- and that is who I am. I can't say "I'm just British." I can't say "I'm just Palestinian." With the solidarity movement it's all mixed together so that is who I am and therefore that's why I feel more comfortable and most of my friends are from there as well.

While Noura shares her complex self-identities with others in the solidarity movement, this multiplicity is to a certain extent undermined by the 'adopting' of activists as honorary Palestinians. Zaki gave the example of the political chant often heard at Palestinian demonstrations: 'in our hundreds, in our millions, we are all Palestinians'. Following this through, Zaki feels that symbolic Palestinian belonging comes less by blood and more by 'if they are with Palestinians, if their heart's with Palestinians'. '[It] doesn't mean that they're actually Palestinian,' he added, but by their actions they may take on this 'expressive identity' and become an honorary member of the Palestinian national family. This generous bestowal of honorary Palestinian-ness is

apparently practised more by younger generations of activists, such as Noura and Zaki, who had to explain to their father what it meant to 'adopt' people as Palestinian:

> Faruq: when we say 'Palestinian' it's Palestinian by origin, not Palestinian because you have done this and that, ok. For British, I could- I am a British because I live in this country, I have been here I am serving for this number of decades, then I became a British but in Palestine there isn't few things you have to do to be a Palestinian. You are Palestinian by your origin […] your blood, yes. Originally you are a Palestinian, wherever you are born, Britain, Russia, China, wherever in the world, you are still Palestinian. […]
>
> Zaki: I think it's definitely, like dad says, by blood but like me and Noura say like 'adopted Palestinians' so I think, because dad doesn't really mix um with a lot of people right now which are doing a lot of these things
>
> Noura: solidarity movement
>
> Zaki: solidarity movement so I think he doesn't, he doesn't really think if you're Palestinian you just have to be Palestinian by blood. Or I think if you want to be a Palestinian it's like what do you do for Palestine. […]
>
> Faruq: they are supporting Palestine but-
>
> Zaki: so I believe they're adopted Palestinians
>
> Faruq: what do you mean 'adopt'?
>
> Noura: I think it's just a terminology that the younger generation really use um
>
> Faruq: adopt, you mean you support them or know that then they are-
>
> Noura: honorary Palestinians
>
> Faruq: oh yes yes yes! Oh yes, of course yes! So I'll adopt them. […] Of course I'll adopt them, beyond any doubt. If they are supporting me, they understand my cause, they sacrifice for me and they're supporting me, *of course*. That's the minimum I can do towards them, is to adopt them. Sorry I just, the word [*inaudible*] I didn't understand […] and that's why I think Israel is facing a lot of troubles now because it's not facing just four or five or seven million Palestinians. They are facing hundreds, if not thousands of millions of people, whom they are Palestinians.

'Adopting' activists as Palestinian is thus part of the same critical mass strategy discussed in relation to Islam, which appears to transform Palestinian-ness from an exclusive national identity to an inclusive, 'expressive' identification that may be opted in and out of (Hetherington 1998; see also Gilroy 2003). However, gathering (albeit symbolically) such a diverse group of people together under the Palestinian umbrella potentially undermines that diversity and demystifies constructions of Palestinian-ness. The enforced unity characteristic of dominant Palestinian identity discourses is again reproducing Palestinian silence: those who conform to the main message or political strategy are included regardless of their ethnic, national or religious affiliation, whereas

alternative views expressed by 'actual' Palestinians can lead to their Palestinian-ness being symbolically revoked. According to Zaki, the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, has been subjected to this fate because he is seen as a political puppet: 'people say he's not Palestinian, he's Israeli'.

What emerges from this discussion of the Al Rimawi and Haniyyah families' 'personal communities' are the ways in which collective belongings are forged through inexplicable connections ('you just click with some people' – Alifa) and domestic intimacy, as well as shared political purpose. However, these are also bound up with the dynamics of individual and collective identities in the sense that the Al Rimawi family shared a sense of belonging to activist groups but in subtly different ways according to age and gender. For Noura in particular, it was only among fellow activists that she could be at home with her own hybridity, whereas for her brother the connections between Palestine, Islam and Arabic culture were more clear-cut. Language, culture and Islam remain important coordinates of collective identity within these 'personal communities', not as neatly bounded and self-sustaining modes of identification but as the beginning of more profound and intimate group belongings operating through things such as kin-like friendships and shared hybridity.

As I have shown, Palestine and Palestinians are part of these personal communities in variously material and abstract ways, but questions remain about how a specifically *Palestinian* collective belonging is constructed in Britain. It is to these questions that I turn in the final part of the chapter in which I will explore the possibilities for a 'Palestinian community' in Britain and the enduring importance of family within Palestinian social relatedness. Specifically, I investigate how family operates as a 'functional idea' and a coordinate of social relations among Palestinians through intersections of kinship and place, how knowledge about these connections is performatively (re)produced among Palestinians in diaspora and participants' ambivalent feelings about these processes of familial 'rootedness' in relation to their individual identities.

Producing Palestinian relatedness

When I asked participants about their thoughts on the notion of a 'Palestinian community' in Britain and whether it was possible to talk about such a thing, their first

responses suggested an institutional conceptualisation of 'community', centring on religious, cultural and national organisations, through which Palestinians in Britain can mark significant national and political occasions (Alexander et al 2007; Mahmoud 2005; Young 1990). Some also appeared to reproduce the assumptions about population, community and sameness discussed earlier (Mavroudi 2010):

> Faruq: we can't deny that it is a British Palestinian community. We can't deny that. This is a fact.
>
> Noura: 'cause you've got organisations like the Palestinian Forum of Britain.
>
> Faruq: because some of them they are here in this country- are here for at least thirty, forty years and their second generation or possibly third generation was born here. So we are a Palestinian British community.
>
> Joanna: mm and you feel it hangs together?
>
> Faruq: yyyes, yes. Not all of them [*inaudible*] there are some odds, ok.
>
> Noura: or not odds it's just different political ideologies.
>
> Faruq: or- yeah, Noura is right, different political ideologies but they are more or less about- related to the Palestinian British community here.
>
> Joanna: m-hm. Ok, so in what way do you feel that it hangs together?
>
> Faruq: hangs together, for example, if there is any problems, any crimes happened in Palestine, any need for help from the Palestinian people in Palestine to their outsiders, you will find them all unified […] even if they disagree in their political ideas or ideologies […] We Palestinians, I think we must be united. We must be really good and we must uh and we must just show our cause and the reality to the world why we are still fighting our cause to have our rights. We don't fight just for the love of fight. We fight because we want our homeland. We want to defend our cause.

According to Faruq and Noura, the presence of representative organisations, the length of time some Palestinians have been in Britain and the ability to achieve political unity in times of crisis all provide the evidence of a community. Difference is reluctantly acknowledged but apparently overcome in times of urgent political need, as Mavroudi (2010) argues. This view is indicative of the politicised atmosphere within the Al Rimawi family. In an earlier interview, for example, when I asked what they felt the connections were between family and heritage, Faruq and Noura told me about organisations that ran events marking various moments in Palestinian history, and they described how the social aspect of these events as well as their political function helped them to 'cope' with living in Britain. Institutions and organised cultural and political activities are thus clearly an important way in which the Al Rimawi family experience community and belonging in Britain. While other participants shared the Al Rimawis'

prioritisation of institutions, many had a more tenuous and almost mythical relationship with them, often seeing them as existing elsewhere in space and time:

> Tawfiq: if you search in London there is a Palestinian club, I think, or something like that, you know, like people who get together. 'Cause I'm a bit- I was in the Arab uh- the Arab society, I think, which is in London. […]
>
> Wadad: within this area, in our area, I don't think there's any such thing as a Palestinian society. London there might be, but I don't think it applies to outside of London. Here. In Bristol, in other areas I'm sure there are but within the southeast, within [this county], I don't think there's a Palestinian- […] a sense of community of just Palestinians. I don't think it applies to this area.
>
> […]
>
> Tawfiq: I'm sure there is but we don't know about them.
>
> Wadad: yeah I know but this is the problem, you see, which means that a Palestinian community- nothing draws us. Nothing draws all the Palestinians to one
>
> Tawfiq: umbrella.
>
> Wadad: ah.
>
> Tawfiq: well, if we do the effort I'm sure that-
>
> Wadad: yeah but at the moment.
>
> Tawfiq: we will find them, you know. But I mean, as you are aware, we've never done any effort to find them or to go to one of their meetings or- I've been to a couple of meetings, I think, when the previous late professor uh Edward Said, before he passed he came in here and gave a couple of speeches. I've been to those speeches.

Thus for Tawfiq and Wadad 'Palestinian community' in an organisational or social form is a shadowy probability rather than a material reality; it is not that it does not exist at all, but that it does not exist *for them*. As such, they accept that a community is produced through one's own effort, either by getting in touch with other Palestinians or attending events such as political lectures.

What also comes through here is that imaginaries and experiences of Palestinian group belonging are localised. Even Faruq would not talk about a 'British Palestinian community' as a country-wide whole: 'there is [a Palestinian community]. Of course there is. Here in [the northwest of England] there is one community […] in London there is a big community'. Similarly, Ilfat described her experiences of Palestinian groups as centred upon the north-west of England where she lives, although she suggested that a more holistic country-wide collectivity had existed 'years before':

> I mean in terms of, like, getting together as a national community from all over Britain, that used to happen much more often. Years before. For some reason it is

> more focused now in London. All the big events for families and um gathering the community, the Palestinian community in Britain, the major events happen in London and sometimes for us [we] find it difficult to take part in events.

Thus basic logistics influence people's ability and willingness to get together. Centralising events in London may garner greater publicity and, in the case of political demonstrations, greater proximity to the relevant embassies and governmental buildings, but they physically exclude those living elsewhere. These logistics operate on a smaller scale as well, but in different ways in different parts of the country. As Tawfiq pointed out, Palestinian families in his area are quite scattered, rarely living less than five miles from one another. This would not be a significant distance for someone like Ilfat who regularly travels between major north-west cities and surrounding areas. However, the comparative congestion of the north-west of England, where Ilfat lives, and the south-east, where Tawfiq and Wadad live, means that travelling five miles takes very different amounts of time and energy.

This varying localisation of participants' senses of Palestinian group belonging is bolstered by the fact that many people's most meaningful experiences came through their relationships with other Palestinian families in their local area and that these more direct connections make a more profound contribution to people's senses of belonging. While institutions and organisations are some of the first to spring to participants' minds when asked about a Palestinian community, when it came to meaningful involvement those institutions appeared distant and mythical, part of a spatial and temporal elsewhere. Moreover, it seems that participants' sense of connectedness to other Palestinians operated in a localised way, through their relationships with other Palestinian families and individuals in their area. As Maryam succinctly put it: 'I wouldn't say there's a Palestinian community in Britain. I'd say there are Palestinian communi*ties* in different areas'.

The remainder of this chapter investigates these connections among Palestinians in more detail. It expands the previous chapter's discussion of personal feelings and practices of family relatedness by engaging with the larger currency of family belonging in Palestinian social relatedness. I do this by exploring how conversations about family bring gendered historical social landscapes of Palestine into a diasporic present, how diasporic social relatedness is forged through the performative (re)production of

knowledge about families and how family belonging and rootedness can be an ambivalent experience for individual participants.

Family and place

As discussed in chapter two, *daar* can refer to both house and family. Exploring further this relationship between family and place raises important issues about kinship and 'rootedness' in Palestine. *Daar* is a familial 'branch' of a larger clan or tribe, known as *ħamouleh*, and although families do not map neatly onto space (see Escribano 1987) many villages in Palestine have names such as Beit Amr (meaning 'House of Amr'), which broadly correspond to the patrilineal 'seat' of a particularly important family in that area. Other common village or town prefixes function in a similar way: *Beni* means 'sons of' or 'clan' (e.g. Beni Naeem, near Hebron); *Kfar* means 'village of' (e.g. Kfar Jamal, near Qalqiliya) (see Abu-Sitta 2007). Conversely, some family names are based on geographical location, such as Nabulsi (associated with Nablus), Khalili (Al-Khalil/Hebron), Yafawi (Jaffa). However, geographical names like these have usually come about through travel: someone who moved from Nablus to Damascus would be referred to as 'Nabulsi', but no-one living in Nablus itself would have this name.[17] In this way patriarchal family and place have historically been closely related within Palestinian society. But how do these relationships between family and place function in diasporic contexts, and more specifically what ongoing currency does the question '*min daar miin*?' ('which family are you from?') have for those living in Britain?

Locating someone geographically is arguably a basic part of social interaction (Laurier 2001) and therefore getting to know someone frequently involves finding out where they are from, that is, placing them somewhere in the world. For several participants this was the innocuous motivation for asking '*min daar miin?* Tayyib, for example, likened it to conversations among British people and general practices of finding points of connection with new acquaintances:

> It is kind of how to start conversation. Like here: "where you're from?" "From England." "What part of England you are [from]?" "I'm from London." "Where [in] London?" "Oh we are from south London." "Oh I have some friends in south London." It is like that.

[17] Dr. Salman Abu-Sitta, personal communication, 23 August 2008

Similarly, for Faruq, asking *'min daar miin?'* was simply 'a friendly way' of introducing oneself to a new acquaintance, of 'know[ing] whom you are talking to' and finding any relationships of family and friends between you, 'which is usually the case'. However, Faruq said that he would only ask *'min daar miin?'* if he was interested in building a friendship with a person and that it was not a question he asked everyone who crossed his path: 'If I find the person, he is a good person to speak with, there is the circumstances allow, then we start to go deeper and then "oh, from which family you are? Which city you are [from]? What's your work?"' The high probability of actually making successful links between families and friends fuels the practice of asking *'min daar miin?'* because it contributes to a sense of relatedness among this globally-dispersed population, as Maryam and Ilfat suggested:

> Ilfat: Families are important in Palestine. People tend to recognise uh families, you know, if you mention to someone, you know, your name, normally (especially older people) will be able to recognise where you're from and, you know, know a little bit about, about you through family because it's- it's more connected […] It's kind of uh linking and knowing. It becomes like knowing the person when they know about his family or if they know someone from his family. It- like, it links people together. […] Because when you say, you know, your name, somebody will say "oh, do you know such and such, he's from the same family?" and you say "oh maybe he's my second cousin" or, you know, so all [*inaudible*] it's like building bridges kind of or networks.

In a separate interview, Maryam commented:

> 'cause everyone sort of knows other people so then they start thinking "oh do you know so and so from that family?" or "are you the same Shaheen as the ones in Tulkarm?" or, you know, and they start connecting, connecting the dots and seeing if they have a connection to you somehow or if you know anyone from your family, and 'cause likelihood they do.

In this way *'min daar miin?'* is a mode of practising (literal and social) relatedness which is enabled by the smallness of historic Palestine, both demographically and spatially (see chapter one). Maintaining such practices of family-based social connections in diaspora forges networks across the world while also reproducing a historical family geography of Palestine.

Maintaining these practices is, however, also to maintain social, class and gender politics of Palestinian families in diaspora. The question *'min daar miin?'* reveals information about a family's 'reputation' as well as their position within a Palestinian

social hierarchy. As Zaki said, *'min daar miin?'* is a way of finding out if you come from a 'good family' or a 'bad family' that is 'always causing trouble'. Wadad elaborated on some of the qualities that might be used to evaluate 'good' and 'bad' families, such as being good tradesmen, hard-working and financially responsible, as well as personal qualities such as commitment, integrity and religious strength. She then went on to explain the specifically classed politics of family:

> Wadad: *"daar miin"*, is "whose house are you from?" in other words "which family are you- do you come from?" […] so then you'll know are they from a main city or from a village, are they from the north or are they from the south […] so you can connect. You can see if there's anything in common. We've got a horrible social thing as well
>
> Joanna: a horrible social thing?
>
> Wadad: yeah, I mean you want to see are they from your social background or are they from less or more or-
>
> Joanna: so it's a class thing
>
> Wadad: it's a class thing, that's it. And that is awful, because it shouldn't happen but it does.

Keen to portray a progressive image of Palestinian society, Faruq only acknowledged these class politics as something from 'the older times', 'about fifty years ago or hundred years ago'. Back then, he said, a woman from a wealthy family could not have married a carpenter, a farmer or anyone else from a humble background, but this happened only 'rarely'. Nowadays, he argued, people recognise that those from such backgrounds can have good reputations and can produce educated offspring, therefore class is no longer relevant and is not a part of asking *'min daar miin?'*

For Amina, however, class as well as gender prejudices are very much alive. When I mentioned *'min daar miin?'* to her and asked if the purpose of the question was to place people within Palestine, she replied without hesitation: 'Class. Class, *ħabibti* [my dear], it's not- it's not family. Aah, don't let anybody fool you, it's a class thing'. She told a story of her friend's father who was dismissive of Amina and the others in his daughter's social group until he asked *'min beit miin inti?'* ('which house are you from?') and discovered that she was an Idilbi: '*khallas* [that's it] I'm accepted. I've become part of the family and I've become- *Yănni* [I mean]*, khallas,* I'm there'. This sudden acceptance angers Amina in several ways: it suggests that she is somehow a 'better class of person' because she is an Idilbi and it ignores both the considerable achievements of

her female relatives who do not carry the Idilbi name and her own accomplishments as an activist, academic and mother:

> It's my family. I'm proud of them. There is no problem. *Bas* [but] you cannot judge me because of the name! […] I respect the formidable women in my family who are not Idilbi. *Yănni*, my mum. *Ana*, for me, *inno* [so] if I become ten per cent of the woman she is-

As discussed in chapter three, family names are patrilineal and women do not change their name upon marriage. The question *'min daar miin?'* therefore situates people within a gendered Palestinian landscape, which Amina regards as subsuming women's independent achievements within dominant patriarchal narratives. Indeed, she went on to tell me of an encounter with a prominent man in the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) when she was at the height of her political activism and was so well known in Palestinian political circles that *he* would have sought a meeting with *her*, rather than the other way around. Yet his first question to her was *'inti bint miin?'* ('who's your father?' , literally 'whose daughter are you?'): '"Who's *my* father?!!" My father used to say "*ana*, I am Amina's father"'. For Amina, this question spoke volumes: 'It tells you there is sexism. It tells you that there is a class thing that is based on the name of the family'.

These gendered class politics of family are not separate from geographies of family. As Wadad mentioned earlier, knowing a person's family name tells you if they are from a city or a village and in which region of Palestine, all of which come with particular prejudices attached that influence social relationships. 'It's a bit like north and south in the UK,' said Wadad, 'people in the north have got a certain reputation, people in the south have got a certain reputation'. In the same way, knowing which part of Palestine someone is from apparently provides clues about their 'character' and even political inclinations. According to Amina, Nabulsis are 'small tradesmen', like those from Haifa but more 'narrow-minded', Khalilis are 'very religious' and have been for centuries, and Ramallah is cosmopolitan because it is the *de facto* political capital of Palestine and the focal point of international NGOs. People from Beersheba are also said to be 'devious and cunning' and Wadad once tried to discourage her friend from marrying a man from Beersheba for that very reason: 'I hate to say this but he did turn out to be quite devious'. Thus while *'min daar miin?'* may open up connections and

friendships among Palestinians in the world, they can also create awkward social situations:

> Wadad: Let's say, for example, the region she comes from is known for something which I don't particularly believe in, then I would kind of not go into- into a friendship or a relationship full on. I'll just be very cautious how I tread and she will either have to prove me right or wrong and then I'll take it from there. Yeah. I'll think twice about everything I do then; about asking her over or maybe going out together or whether- it's just in case. And if I see things I don't like then I can pull back but that's like in every relationship really […] It's interesting because if she came from the same place where I came from and even if we didn't agree on things, I would be more comfortable in that relationship because maybe um I understood her a bit more because she comes from the same town that I come from.
>
> Tawfiq: aah Wadad this is prejudice, I think
>
> Wadad: I know, I'm just telling her
>
> Tawfiq: this is prejudice.

What all of this demonstrates is that, among Palestinians, naming one's family enables others to place you within Palestine and to position you within a social hierarchy. Some claim that this placing and positioning is anachronistic and has no meaning in contemporary diasporic practices of relatedness. But if family as a coordinate of social relations is considered out of date, it is certainly not out of place, as the reproduction of family geographies provides apparently limitless fuel for diasporic connections that may or may not be coloured by class. This is not to say that geography is innocent or apolitical, since discerning one's regional belonging through family can be as damning or redeeming as one's family name and also since asking *'min daar miin?'* is a mechanism for recuperating women into a patriarchal landscape. Implicit in this discussion are the politics of knowledge surrounding these family geographies and their enduring currency in the lives of diasporic Palestinians. In the next section I discuss how age and social context influence the (re)production of family knowledge, as well as the performative dynamics of that knowledge in diasporic interactions.

Knowledge dynamics

When I asked participants to tell me about the family geographies of Palestine, many pointed towards elders as the repositories of this knowledge:

> Wadad: I was just going to say my father would be here for hours explaining everything, but I wouldn't. I know very generally, very generally who they are.

> Noura: for my parents and my grandparents it is something that is important and they will always ask "oh who's your friend?" […] even as just a friend, though, um they will want to know. For example, when I went to Jordan, my friend was getting married and I went down to visit my grandma [and said], like, "I'm going- I'm coming for my friend, who's getting married." "Who's your friend?" and I just said her name and she was like "oh! What's her surname?" and then I- as soon as I said to her that, "oh they're a big family from Tulkarm and Nablus, this that and that, oh and your uncle worked with someone from there."

Fu'ad, who is in his seventies, said he knew Palestinian family geographies but could only discuss them with someone of his own age and similar migration history, as this knowledge is based on when he lived in Palestine and the pattern of family geographies at the time he left. It would seem that moving to Britain removed Fu'ad from the networks that would update and expand his knowledge of family geographies, and his has therefore been frozen in a particular moment in time. This resonates with a wider concern among participants that diasporic life is changing both the substance of these knowledges and the means by which they are reproduced among subsequent generations. As Wadad said, her father could be 'here for hours' explaining the family geographies of Palestine, whereas she has only a general knowledge:

> [I know] more about the regions, general regions, you know just […] I mean, when I visit Nablus, I'll hear of a few families and I'll know [*inaudible*] and that's it, whereas my father will tell me exactly who their grandfather was and where they came from and, you know, if they have moved from a town to a town, so originally they weren't from there. He would know all that.

Wadad attributes the depth of her father's knowledge to the values of his generation, who took a great interest in origins as means of organising successful marriages for their children:

> When I was getting ready to get married, my father used to say "you've got to marry someone from Nablus" because to him it was so important. Tawfiq wasn't from Nablus, but then he made up for it by being [*inaudible*] [*laughs*]. But my two brothers are both married to girls from Nablus, so- my mother's from Nablus. You know, I mean, to him it was so important. I mean, now you get people across- you know, just get married. If they're suitable they get married. If they're Palestinian they get married. Whereas [to] my father's generation it was so important to stick to your region, so you understood them. You had a better chance of making the marriage work because you shared the same, you know, [character].

Indeed, it was for this reason that Wadad's father vetoed marriage proposals from other suitors before Tawfiq. In addition to the fact that Tawfiq's family were known to be at the top of Tulkarm's social hierarchy, he was also from the same general region of Palestine, which in Wadad's father's eyes made them a more compatible match: 'because I met other people and he said to me "no, don't even think about it" [*chuckles*]. I mean, because he said "you won't be able to communicate, you won't be able to understand each other either"'. It does not seem likely that Wadad will be allowed to exercise this geographical judgement when her sons eventually marry: 'As long as she's Palestinian. To them Palestine is Palestine […] I don't think they'll look at regions. As long as she's Palestinian and Muslim, that's it'. In this way, Wadad believes her father's knowledge of family geographies will 'die out' because her sons seem uninterested in learning about it and she doubts they will become interested in the future.

In a way, then, knowledge of Palestinian family geographies is contextual. The historic function of family as a social and economic institution in Palestine meant that Wadad's father and others of his generation took a keen interest in family names because it ensured successful marriages for their children and a secure future for the family itself. Moreover, everyday interaction within this context not only reinforces this knowledge but provides a means for subsequent generations to absorb it and practice it for themselves. As Wadad said, she learned what she knows 'just by being there'. Similarly, Ilfat felt that acquiring this knowledge was a 'natural' process, 'you absorb a little bit of information as, you know, without awareness I think':

> People just pick it up, even the younger generations […] because the nature of social life, you know, people sit a lot together, you know they talk and the- the father normally or the grandfather uh if they come across somebody with, you know, they met, they will mention that they know somebody related to that person. So younger people pick things up like that, you know, just listening.

For those not living among other Palestinians this 'organic' reproduction of family knowledge is inhibited because there is not the same immersion in social practices. As such, Ilfat has expanded her library of names very slowly during her adult life, 'because I left very young and we lived away from Palestine so all my interactions in Libya were not to do with this kind of information'. This later development of knowledge about family geographies was not something she deliberately pursued partly because she has a

poor memory for these things and partly because it is not personally important to her in the way it is to 'the general Palestinian'. Nevertheless, Ilfat was tentative and apologetic when I presented her with a map of historic Palestine and asked her to explain some of the geographies of different families to me:

> Ilfat: for example, there is from Hebron, there is
>
> Joanna: the Khalilis
>
> Ilfat: al-Khalil
>
> Joanna: that's kind of an adopted [geographical name]
>
> Ilfat: adopted, yeah, there is Badr is also. That's a common- which is similar to my grandfather's name and that's why people confuse me sometimes when they know [my name is] Ilfat 'Azzam Bakr, they ask 'are you from Khalil?' you know […] There's SaHboub also, SaHboub from Khalil, another known family […] I'm not very good with- with this knowledge of like- like people who lived actually in the area because we- I left Palestine when I was seven and lived in Libya all my- you know, grown up- you know, as I was growing up, so I didn't- I'm not as knowledgeable as someone who lived in Jordan or Palestine for that matter, Indeed. But I, you know, I know a little bit.
>
> Joanna: yeah ok, so who else can you remember?
>
> Ilfat: um
>
> Joanna: who did you say comes from Nablus?
>
> Ilfat: al-Masri […] from Jaffa I know Ghanim, but I don't know how big that family is. My friends
>
> Joanna: ah ok, what was the other Jerusalem family, the Al Quds, the
>
> Ilfat: al-Maqdasi. Again related to Al Quds, you know, al-Maqdasi, [is] adapted to the area. There is from our area here, al- Aswāni, al- Aswāni from Beit Awwa. There is all- all similar like, Noubani from Beit Nouba, all Hanini from Beit Hanina and so on and so forth. Many people keep their village name as a surname.
>
> […]
>
> Joanna: Are there any, are there any um well-known families from Tulkarm?
>
> [*pause*]
>
> Joanna: Or Jenin?
>
> Ilfat: um [*pause*] I don't really know much, as I said, you know, unfortunately I'm not very good. No, I can't.

It was probably unfair of me to 'test' participants' knowledge about family geographies in this way by presenting them with a blank map and asking them to fill it in. Several other participants became similarly hesitant when faced with this map, protesting their ignorance and directing me to speak to someone older, wiser and more knowledgeable. But although Ilfat and others pointed to their diasporic upbringing to

explain away their lack of knowledge, I suggest that it has more to do with the fact that this knowledge is not possessed but practised. As discussed earlier, Fu'ad's knowledge of family geographies only came out in conversation with people of his own age and background, and it was not something to be summarily performed for a young, British researcher such as myself. As Ilfat said, people 'pick up' knowledge about families through social interaction and younger generations absorb it through listening to those conversations and, later, being enrolled in them. Zaki imagined proximate family life to be the scene of these performative knowledges and regarded the scattering of family as hastening their demise:

> 'Cause they were all probably living together, that's why [people knew where families were from]. It's like, they- it's like, people used to live in, like, a whole family just in a block of flats […] [my parents] probably [learnt what they know] from their parents and family. 'Cause we don't really usually see our family quite a lot, like, cousins, grandparents, uncles, we don't usually see them. We used to, like once a year but now it's just everybody's busy, work and everything, it's a lot harder.

For Faruq, however, family life in Britain remains the primary arena for teaching children about these Palestinian family geographies, highlighting mother-children relationships in particular, since his wife is especially interested in and knowledgeable about family geographies. It is from her that he has acquired much of his own knowledge:

> Joanna: do you have plans to pass on your knowledge about families to your children?
>
> Faruq: yes, that comes not in sessions here, it comes during the day to day life activities and talks. Mainly the wife is having the major part because she is with them longer than me, because I have long working hours. But that's delivered to them day by day […] it comes through your- your [*inaudible*] "oh your aunt, today your aunt or this lady from home, from work," that's how it comes. There's no sessions. There's no session to say "ok today [*inaudible*] we have a family session."

For others such as Maryam, encounters with strangers at social events when she was younger led her to discover much of what she knows about her own family, as older people would ask her *'min daar miin?'* and she was unable to answer:

> People do expect you to know where you're from. Like, physically what family and things. 'Cause I remember when I was younger and they'd be like "oh, so, you know, which *daar* are you from?" and I'd be like "I don't know. I haven't got a clue" and then they'd be, like, you know, look at you sort of, like, "you don't know?! How could

> you not know, you know, something like that?!" All right. We're going home and asking, "where are we from?" and that's how I found out I was Aswani.

Here again we find the knowledge-gradient descending from 'elders' to 'the younger generation', which belies the influence of social and geographical context on knowledgeability. As Noura pointed out, people of 'younger generations' who had been brought up in the Middle East took a greater interest in family than she and her cousins in the States. 'Generally people that have left the Arab world, the younger generation, have stopped asking that question', she said. However, if she tells her similarly-aged cousin in Jordan that a friend is getting married 'she'll say "oh, who to?" and I'll just say "oh just-" I'll mention a first name but they'll always want to know the second name and for us, we're like, we don't know. It's not something that interests us really'. In this way the diasporic geographies of Noura's family influences knowledge about family geographies of Palestine, such that those raised in a context where such knowledge is practised (like her cousin in Jordan) can exercise it, whereas those raised elsewhere in the world (like Noura and Zaki in Britain) cannot.

Thus from Noura's perspective, the combination of diasporic life and generational differences was altering both the meaning and 'spatial resolution' of knowledge about Palestinian family geographies. Where previous generations knew family names as a means of assessing someone by their family size, location and reputation, she and her siblings know a few family surnames but simply as a means of distinguishing between people. 'I know a lot of Mohammeds,' said Zaki, 'it's like, "who are you going out with?" "Mohammed." It's like, "Mohammed who?"' For Noura and Zaki, then, the question '*min daar miin?* is a less effective means of placing a new acquaintance within Palestine than simply and directly asking 'which city are you from?':

> Noura: If you find out someone's from Palestine, you go, "oh, which city in Palestine are you from?" Whereas my parents will ask *"min daar miin?",* or my grandparents. Because we have more knowledge of the cities and we can identify the cities a lot more, so cities for us are something. Because even within this generation, as soon as you find out someone's f- you go "oh!" the first the question you ask immediately after: "whereabouts in Palestine are you from?" […] For example I was in um in a conference I think somewhere and I found out a girl was from Hebron and she, actually she was from a small village in Hebron, so I don't really know the villages in Hebron and- and still immediately I went "oh, which village?" and it turns out that she's from the same village as Maryam and I was, like- so even though at the time you might not identify or know exactly where- it's just knowledge that you, like, know and you like to identify really.

Despite her earlier prediction that it is already a 'lost knowledge', Noura here demonstrates that these knowledges are very much alive within her own conversational practices, albeit based around different questions and a less detailed understanding of families and place. She also pointed out variations in knowledge among her siblings, rather than just between them and their parents, and so she recognises that this is something that accumulates over time even if she remains pessimistic about its future:

> I think for Zaki it's different because he's a lot younger.[18] For me, if you throw a few surnames at me I will identify them. For example, like Maryam's family's surname um [and] my other friends […] I'll probably know three, four surnames and that- and that's about it really. So maybe as I grow older there will be a few more surnames that I will learn and know about but will that knowledge be sustained? I don't think so.

Clearly diasporic knowledge of Palestinian family geographies varies in depth and 'resolution' within and across individuals, age-groups and social contexts. Moreover, this knowledge is practised in social and familial interaction, rather than simply possessed and imparted by elders, with sometimes uncomfortable implications for 'placing' families within historic Palestine and positioning them within social hierarchies.

What all of this demonstrates is that social geographies of family are lived by Palestinians in Britain in ways that bring historic Palestine into a diasporic present, whilst simultaneously effecting an imaginative (and performative) 'return'. These performative memory spaces function through the inter-generational reproduction of knowledge about family names. As the 'living embodiment of both continuity and change', generations bring past Palestinian family geographies into a diasporic present and bear responsibility for carrying those geographies into the future (Fortier 2000, 150). In the process, family belonging becomes bound up with Palestinian belonging in terms of geographical 'rootedness' and being part of the social fabric. The implications of this rootedness for individual and collective identities are, however, somewhat ambivalent. As I will now show, the social power of family can be suffocating as well as empowering and changing conceptualisations of family wrought by migration have also involved a shift in commitment to family reputation.

[18] Zaki is eight years younger than Noura.

Ambivalent 'roots'

As discussed earlier, the Idilbis are an established Jerusalem family, whose history can be traced over centuries and whose members number in their hundreds of thousands: 'in England it would be closest to old aristocracy who- it is not [really aristocracy] and I know that it is not and it doesn't translate well but if you know Palestinian culture, *yănni* [I mean], you say Idilbi, Husseini, they are well- very well known names that are in the history books'. Amina describes this as, in some ways, providing a welcome sense of 'roots' having been 'uprooted' at a young age to come to boarding school in Britain. Those roots are partly associated with the fact that her family is historically documented but it is also bound up with social performances of family belonging, in which strangers on the street in Jerusalem will stop her and say 'you're Ghassan's daughter, aren't you?' or 'you're Radwa's daughter, aren't you?' She particularly enjoys it if this happens when her children are with her because it teaches them about family and place and belonging in Palestine:

> I go to the old city and I'm taking them with me and I'm looking at books on the bus and the man says "I know you are his sister, but are you?" and I said "yes" and my children were jumping up and down "How? How?! How does this man know who you are?!" "Because he knows uncle." "How does he know?! How does he know you're his sister?!" "Because we almost look the same, we all look the same, we all look similar", you know. And it's pleasant now that, when I take them, they see the roots. You know, it's as if you're literally talking about a tree and the roots. They can see that the uncle and the mum and the grandma and all of it is related and these people know us because they *are* us, because this man has been renting uh his shop from my great-great-grandfather and he pays three piasters[19] a year but he knows that I own his shop. But I don't own it at all, like maybe three hundred people own it, but still that is the rootedness.

For Amina, the rootedness and relatedness that her children experience during these encounters is political as well as personal: 'So when Zayd goes to university and he's confronted with Golda Meir's "people without land, land without a people" he'll say "hmm, you know what? No." But he's seen it and it's not something that I told to- I told it to him, it's something that he experienced'. The Israeli Prime Minister, Golda Meir, was famously quoted as saying that Palestinians did not exist because historically there had never been a discernible Palestinian people with a Palestinian state. Amina also refers to the Zionist slogan: 'a land without a people for a people without a land'.

[19] Unit of Ottoman currency.

Both Meir's assertion and this slogan are frequently used to discredit Palestinian identity and claims to belonging in a place called Palestine. It is difficult to imagine what it feels like to be repeatedly told that the culture and place you identify with do not exist, but it is easy to understand how empowering it might be to simply walk down the street and be enrolled in the performances of genealogical-geographical belonging Amina described:

> It does feel really, really nice that you go there and that is your family and your family is rooted to a place and the place is there and it's like a tree and it takes hold in the ground and it holds, like that. And my children are now there and my children are feeling it. […] it's a line, it's a familial line that is connected to rootedness but I'm one of the lucky ones because my history and my rootedness is mapped out. Not everybody's is but mine is absolutely mapped out on both sides of the family. So that's my father's grand- da da da to the eighth grandfather's house. But my mum is a Khouri, I mean, her heritage is Khouri so their house is still *fil Quds* [in Jerusalem] […] it's there, you know, don't tell me I don't belong to this land.

While this mapping of the Idilbi family history in the physical and social landscapes of Jerusalem, and in books, provides an incontrovertible anchor for Amina, she readily acknowledges that this is bound up with the social calibre of her family and that many other Palestinians are not so fortunate. Jameel described the pain of watching Rory Bremner trace his roots on the BBC television programme 'Who Do You Think You Are?':

> I said to Helene, "amazing that he can go to the centre of so and so and so, yes, to find his great-grandfather's hospital medical records. What he did is preserved, society preserves it. I cannot go anywhere." Really. I probably have to go to some archives in England and find what is the remnants of it. Do you understand what I'm saying? Here churches- you go to a local church, three-hundred years, you'll find the roots. I cannot find it, that was destroyed. That's why we say the *Nakba* did this to us and we stop there, you know. Our modern life starts with the *Nakba* and until that is acknowledged […] and faced head on- The Israelis, the Jews- the Jews did that with the Holocaust. They asked everybody to come and acknowledge it and visit the Holocaust museum. […] Shit, where am I going to take them? Where do I take them? Come to my living room, my father left me a box. That's it. I don't have a museum.

For Jameel and countless others, one's documented roots are not stored across networks of governmental and social institutions, waiting to be excavated and displayed as 'proof' of history and heritage. Instead, Jameel's roots are fragments in a single box, handed down through the generations and currently stored in the privacy of his own living room. As such, they retain considerable personal significance but lack the

political power of Amina's well-documented family history. However, this illustrious lineage is not without its price. Although Amina now appreciates being stopped in the street and identified as the daughter of Ghassan Idilbi and Radwa Khouri, this has not always been the case:

> When I was growing up, I wanted to be who I am. I didn't want people to define me by who my parents or my auntie was or- Although I was very, very proud of them, but I wanted to be who I am, which is I think a rite of passage […] So many members of my family are so highly accomplished. *Yănni* [I mean], I'm a niece of [the poet] Latifa Khouri. How do you escape that? How do you top that? How do you follow that? But I didn't want to follow it. I just wanted to be me.

In this respect, coming to boarding school and later university in Britain afforded her freedoms she would never have enjoyed had she remained in Jerusalem. It was after she moved to Britain that she began to enjoy her return visits and the experience of going to the post office to buy stamps and the clerk saying 'you're Ghassan Idilbi's daughter, aren't you?', although she still retains a certain ambivalence about her own subjectivity within this illustrious family:

> I'm uncomfortable with being an Idilbi because I'm recognisable anywhere in the world by name or by face, because I'm- I definitely look an Idilbi. There is no question where I- you know, which family I belong to. So I'm not comfortable with that because I grew up with this dictum that you are who you are, not who your family is and I don't know how good your Arabic is but there is a proverb that says "the person or the man is not who says 'who is my dad', the man who says 'here I am, it's who I am'", which is why I was happy here [in Britain] because who knows who Amina Idilbi is, unless they know who Amina Idilbi is. They don't know who Idilbis are, even other Palestinians they don't know unless they are in the- in the- unless they are in the locality whether in knowledge or geographically, why would they know? […] So I was happy because people who- whatever I did it was me and not my dad.

Diasporic life has thus enabled Amina to become her own person in ways she would not have been able to had she remained in Jerusalem, although she remains 'visible' to those who are knowledgeable of the family geographies of Jerusalem. To paraphrase her: in Britain very few people know 'Amina Idilbi' as the daughter of Ghassan Idilbi and Radwa Khouri, and the niece of renowned poets Latifa and Muntasir Khouri, most people know the person called 'Amina Idilbi' who is an accomplished academic, political activist and mother in her own right. Desiring such a distinction between two (interrelated) 'Amina Idilbis' is not to reject her lineage. Rather this

distinction, which resulted from her years studying and living in Britain, has allowed her the necessary physical distance to develop her own purpose and direction inspired but not overshadowed by the achievements of her ancestors and relatives.

One does not need an illustrious genealogy in order to experience a similar recuperation by family. Idilbi, 'Azzam or Habayib, everyone has a family reputation to uphold and, as ever, diasporic life is complicating what this means. As this conversation between Faruq, Noura and Zaki demonstrates, the politics of individuality within family is bound up both with a person's moral compass and with hierarchies of loyalty associated with different 'kinds' of family:

> Joanna: is there a feeling of responsibility to the family reputation that makes people behave in ways that conform to the family [*inaudible*]?
>
> Noura: like for me, no because […] before I look at the family name I look at what I believe in, me as an individual, so I know it's wrong. So before I worry about what someone else is going to say I'll be like "oh, this is wrong, I shouldn't be doing it". And also, coming from an Islamic background, before [worrying about] what people say, well, what does my religion say? So for me, personally, it doesn't really matter what people say, if they're, you know, "oh I'm worried about my family reputation." I'm worried about other things first before my family reputation.
>
> […]
>
> Faruq: She is correct in one way but possibly the explanation of it, how she put it doesn't be accurate hundred per cent. Of course, she care first of all as Muslim, as she said. She cares the most important about what God and religion is saying and follow that, and that's from the top and that's again correct. Then after that she will care for the name of her father and mother. Like, even if something is right and her mother and father said "no don't do it for this and this and that" I do believe Noura and all my children, they will follow it, even in their mind it is wrong ok, even if there is not something major but as a respect to their parents, they follow it.
>
> Noura: but we- is that because we respect you or because we respect the family name?
>
> Faruq: I am the family name. Respect to the parent.
>
> Zaki: no, [I] think its more respect to the parent not the family name
>
> Faruq: respect
>
> Noura: if your dad said "don't do something" and you didn't do it, do you not do it because you don't want to disobey your father or you do not want to disobey the Al Rimawi family?
>
> Faruq: it is not the Al Rimawi family, as I think. What I understand the question or how I understand the question is, when we say the family is your immediate family, not the family which you have never seen hundred or two hundred years ago
>
> […]
>
> Noura: when I say Al Rimawi it doesn't just mean my mum and dad, it means The Al Rimawi Family. So I've answered that question in that sense. I think maybe me and

dad have swapped roles now and he is answering the question in terms of the Al Rimawi family, as in this household.

Faruq: no, no, of course it has the proximal or the nearest part and the farthest part. The nearest part of the Al Rimawi family is your parents and the farthest part is the one grand-grandfather that you have never seen. So when we take the respect of the immediate family this is, you could say in one way or the other, this is the respect for the whole family. You could say that. You could say no but in principle what you have said is correct. We agree together but it is just, what I would say, is the respect of your parents is part of respecting of Al Rimawi or it is a different rule. I would think it is the same rule.

Zaki: and I think it's, say, if I'm making a decision or anything, it's always the immediate family. Like the dad if- respect to him, it's like I don't really think about the family, like the Al Rimawi family. Like if, say, it was my grandma or something, [*inaudible*] but then if you go past my grandparents I don't think I would really mind or listen to as much about the family name, respect of the family name, because I don't really know the person. So I've never met them personally and then why should I listen to somebody which I don't know or anything?

Faruq: because they have died. That's what we say here. When we come to the respect here, I think it comes to the immediate family.

The influence of the Al Rimawi 'family reputation' on Noura's behaviour therefore is a negotiation between her own spirituality and her sense of loyalty to her parents, rather than a sense of obligation to the wider Al Rimawi *ħamouleh*. Similarly, Zaki's responsibility is to the people he knows and cares about, rather than to dead or distant relatives who are family only in the 'limited' genealogical sense. For their father, however, one's obligation to proximate and distant family is *the same* obligation. Just as he argued earlier against distinguishing between nuclear and extended family, here he argues against incrementalising loyalty in such a way that it applies to immediate family but not to the wider family. As he put it, 'I am the family name', therefore his children's loyalty to him as their parent, specifically their father, is in itself loyalty to the family name.

In this way, placing and positioning one's family geographically within Palestine and socially among Palestinians also involves the potentially difficult task of placing oneself as an individual within a family. As I have shown, these are historically-established practices that are being variously reproduced, challenged and adapted in diasporic life, sometimes in ways that open up the very meaning of family. In this way, family geographies of Palestine continue to *live* in conversations among Palestinians, which brings historical spaces of Palestine into a diasporic present and enables an

imaginative 'return'. Moreover, participants' experiences of visiting Palestine and being immersed in social practices of family belonging can performatively root them in a particular place and provide the identity tools for 'proving' Palestinian existence. However, this rootedness should not be interpreted as inherently good or as a universal experience. Rather, it is delicate negotiation of individual and collective identities, in which migration plays a complicating and sometimes liberating role.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the dynamics of collective identity among Palestinians in Britain, particularly the overlaps and fissures between multiple identities and the wider range of ideas, feelings and practices through which group belonging is forged. It has engaged with the different ways participants construct their own place in the world, how common coordinates of collective identity overlap in the construction of 'personal communities', and how a specifically Palestinian collective belonging is produced in a diasporic context. In the process I have shown that focusing on the ties between people and the ways in which these ties draw on, challenge and transcend dominant modes of community and collective identity reveals the creativity in how communities and identities are lived in diasporic contexts in ways that relate to but also exceed feelings of national collectivity and homeland rootedness. Also, shifting focus away from narratives of Palestinian identity to the ways in which Palestinian social relatedness is practised in conversations about family name challenges politically-motivated (and politically-silencing) representations of Palestinian society as classless and allows a richer social landscape to emerge.

From this perspective collective belonging is felt and practised differently over time by grandparents, parents and children. Knowledge about historic family geographies of Palestine is mainly attributed to older family members in a way that records the slow accumulation of knowledge over countless conversations through which that very knowledge is performatively produced. Moreover, these practices and identities are gendered insofar as the historical landscape of Palestinian families is a patrilineal one, based on the father and the father's family name, as well as the question '*min daar miin?* being itself a mechanism for regulating women within a patriarchal framework.

By focusing on the overlaps between dominant modes of identity and the performative cultures of social relatedness through which group belonging is forged, this chapter contributes to debates about collective identity and diasporic 'community' as actively forged both through and against various forms of difference (Fortier 2000; Young 1990). Inter-generational knowledge dynamics performatively reproduce collective memories of a historical landscape, while that landscape is simultaneously mobilised in the forging of diasporic relatedness by geographically placing and socially positioning others in relation to the self. This builds on the previous chapter's argument for thinking about family belonging as a mode of spatialised identity, by further arguing for social geographies of family to be considered a mechanism of collective belonging in diasporic contexts.

7 CONCLUSIONS

In this thesis I have explored the meaning of home, family and identity among Palestinians living in Britain. I have done this by focusing on three areas: domestic space, family relationships and social groups. Firstly, by examining the ways in which domestic spaces figure in participants' everyday lives through practices of hospitality, material objects of identity and relationships of family, I investigated how domestic space and individual practices of identity, family and social life are interrelated in variously contested and harmonious ways. Secondly, I explored the geographies of Palestinian families in order to understand how participants produce a sense of relatedness over a range of distances and how this influences the way that 'family' is imagined as a spatially and temporally situated unit. Finally, I investigated the dynamics of social groups and collective identity, engaging with how Palestinian social relatedness is enacted and the implications of this for notions of place-based identity and collective belonging. In the process I also explored how family functions as a social coordinate, bringing historic social geographies of Palestine to life in diasporic contexts through conversations about family name. Underpinning all of this has been a methodological commitment to working with families as groups as well as individuals, and to feminist postcolonial efforts to make normatively excluded voices heard.

A central finding of this endeavour has been the intricate interrelatedness of home, family and identity as signalled in the title of this thesis, *daar al Falastini*. As a word meaning both 'house' and 'family', *Daar* foregrounds the intersections between domestic space and kinship that I have explored, as well as referencing broader relationships between home, place and family that lie at the heart of the question *'min daar miin?'* and are so crucial to Palestinian social relatedness. In this way, *daar al Falastini* ('house of the Palestinians') conjures a space of Palestinian identity constituted by powerful social meanings of house, home and family that are both rooted in particular places and intensified across diasporic contexts. It is a mode of identity that may be both chosen and given, in the sense that *daar* affiliations have historically been

strategic as well as inherited. It is an identity-in-process insofar as the *daar* is formed and maintained through its members' continued investment in its existence and their continual production and negotiation of relatedness. It is a spatialised identity in the sense that *daar* is historically placed and metaphorically implies a shared house, but also in the sense that *daar* has the capacity to include people dispersed across a range of distances. Finally, it is a Palestinian identity that references homeland rootedness but also captures the social relationships that give this abstract collective identity interpersonal substance.

As I have shown, *daar al Falastini* is forged through a wide variety of engagements with domestic space, family and social groups. This is not meant to be radically individualistic nor does it preclude commonalities across participants. Rather it takes individuals as relational beings whose own senses of home, family and identity are constructed through their positionality within a range of kin and social relationships, personal and collective experiences, as well as dominant discourses of nation, religion and culture. Moreover, individuals may have different ideas of what home, family and identity mean but may go about producing these things in similar ways that cut across the themes of domestic space, family and collective identity that I have addressed. Three areas of similarity are practices, relationships and notions of a 'place in the world'.

Firstly, I suggest that participants shared a belief in the importance of certain practices to the (re)production of identity, and that these practices were often enacted within domestic space and in the context of mundane family life, but also as part of wider social relationships. The key practices at work here are language and conversations about family. Many participants used the boundaries of domestic space and everyday family interactions to teach their children *ămiyeh*, which is vital to communication and shared experiences with sometimes distant family members and the wider Arab-speaking world, which many parents saw as central to cultivating their children's Arabic identity and sense of belonging among relatives as well as other Arabs. In this way, linguistic practices are part of familial and social relationships that take place within domestic settings but extend beyond those spaces into wider networks of diasporic identity and belonging. However, these practices are also part of relationships conducted outside the house and particularly important in the external and internal dynamics of Palestinian group belonging.

In one sense, Arabic could be thought of as an outward-oriented political tool for diasporic Palestinians insofar as it validates claims to Palestinian identity and belonging in the face of opponents who seek to undermine those claims. However, Arabic was also a kind of 'proof' for fellow Palestinians insofar as it was sometimes regarded as a prerequisite for Palestinian community belonging. Indeed, the all-important conversations about family are conducted in Arabic, opening with the question *'min daar miin?'*, 'which family are you from?' This is a crucial mode of diasporic Palestinian relatedness, which references and re-materialises the social geographies of Palestine through the exchange of knowledge about particular families. In this way, speaking Arabic enables claims to Palestinian identity and experiences of Palestinian belonging, particularly through the conversational performance of the specialist knowledge around the social geographies of family in Palestine itself.

The second strategy shared by participants in the production of senses of home, family and identity was the emphasis on certain kinds of relationships, which were based on kin-like intimacies as well as on shared diasporic and political identities. Once again domestic space featured prominently in participants' closest relationships, with closeness itself often measured in friends' access to and behaviour within the house, including having their own key and opening someone else's fridge, which conjured (and partly recreated) idealised memories of co-habiting family life in pre-1948 Palestine. However, the house is also the scene of more organised socialising that contributes to feelings of being 'at home' in Britain by enabling Arabic styles of visiting and hosting to be maintained, although only within the limits of domestic architecture. Equally, the absence of visitors and invitations was a source of unhomeliness for some who wished to recapture (or recreate) the atmosphere of the busy Arab household of their childhood.

The intimacy of participants' closest friendships was often likened to kin relationships, either as an equivalent or as superior. Special friends were sometimes said to be 'like family' or 'more than family' because their relationship had been a choice rather than an obligation of blood, which creates a sense of kin-like belonging both in Britain and in the context of dispersed family. Similar claims were made about special relationships with a cousin, aunt or uncle who had been 'chosen' out of tens of relatives on the basis of a unique connection or affinity, which incrementalises familial belonging into 'kin' (those who are given and accepted) and 'kindred spirits' (those who are chosen

and cherished). Although the precise substance of these special relationships could be elusive ('we just clicked'), shared cultural understanding and diasporic experience were often cited as key factors. Being able to switch fluidly between languages, to discuss politics and art in specific ways, to have one's partial, in-between identity accepted and reciprocated; these were all part of participants' sense of belonging among selected people, which could cut across national, cultural and religious identities, as well as across distance itself, as variously proximate and faraway family and friends are incorporated into participants' most intimate circles.

The third way in which participants constructed their own senses of home, family and identity was by considering their place in the world in a way that connected Britain and Palestine and gave meaning to participants' diasporic existence. In other words, this is the means by which participants construct Britain as a space of belonging without relinquishing similar attachments to Palestine. Key and interrelated ways in which participants constructed their place in the world were through politics, religion and an idea of the future, particularly for their children. For some, Britain is 'where it all started' for Palestine, which gives life and political work in Britain poetic meaning, although the initial choice to move may have been motivated by other things. For others, politics and religion were more mixed, with a sense of one's 'place' being in Britain having been brought here by God to educate people about Palestine, as well as a diasporic house being given higher, spiritual purpose by mobilising that domestic space on behalf of Palestine. In this way, diasporic and homeland spaces of Britain and Palestine are connected and rendered meaningful through political and religious purpose, sometimes enacted through the house itself.

All of these perspectives involve an orientation towards the future, as working towards the ultimate liberation of Palestine was seen as a good deed in this life that would be rewarded in the next. This was also coupled with participants' desires to equip their children with the spiritual tools they would need for a successful life and after-life, as well as more general commitments to their children's sense of identity in Britain. Establishing or sending children to an Arabic language school, for example, was bound up with parental desires for their offspring to engage meaningfully with the moral and spiritual guidance of the Qur'an. At the same time, those schools connected both children and parents with wider cultural and social circles that contribute to

feelings of being at home in Britain. In a more general sense, however, parents' choices to remain in Britain even when they had opportunities to leave were sometimes made out of consideration for their children's education, which may have been at a critical stage, or in recognition of their multiple sense of belonging to Palestine and the Arab world, as well as to Britain. At the same time, Britain can also be seen as the site of a secure family future for those who have experienced double upheaval, from Palestine as a child and from Kuwait as an adult. As such, belonging in Britain may be forged by working towards a material and spiritual future for one's family, particularly one's children, which may be oriented towards Arab and Muslim culture and religion but also recognises the multiplicity of children's diasporic upbringing and their identification with and sense of belonging in Britain.

These three broad approaches towards home, family and identity – practices, relationships and notions of a 'place in the world' – resonate with the four narratives of Palestinian identity outlined at the beginning of this thesis, albeit in a more complex, situated and partial way. Those four narratives referred to Jerusalem, *al Nakba*, peasant culture and gendered nationhood, and they have figured within this thesis in various ways: in participants' reflections on Jerusalem as the scene of their childhood house and ongoing family connections; in the shared effects of mass expulsion during the *Nakba* and later during the Gulf War; in the display of embroidery that would historically have been engaged in by peasants; and in the patriarchal landscapes of family mobilised in conversations around *'min daar miin?'* However, these narratives resonate more strongly with my research if taken in more thematic terms as place, memory, classed culture and identity reproduction.

Firstly, rather than insisting upon the importance of a single place, such as Jerusalem, my research validates the multiple attachments to place that characterise diasporic Palestinian identities; that is, affiliations distributed across house, home and homeland, mobile place-making skills such as the contents of a handbag or relationships with kin in locations across the world, as well as the enduring social importance of familial rootedness in Palestine. Secondly, rather than taking a single historical moment as the defining event of a collective consciousness, my research asserts the importance of personal experiences of that crucial event and intimate memories of childhood, house, home and family that are maintained in diasporic contexts through

configurations of domestic space and material cultures, and through promoting particular ideals of family. Moreover, my research demonstrates an alternative construction of collective consciousness through family geographies; a form of social memory through which Palestinian-ness is performed and recognised.

Thirdly, instead of objectifying and romanticising peasantry as embodying Palestinian rootedness and as the source of Palestinian national iconography, my research accepts the classed landscape as a mode of identification in itself, insofar as the social revelations and class prejudices associated with *'min daar miin?'* retain a diasporic currency that gives otherwise abstract connections of shared Palestinian-ness interpersonal substance. Finally, rather than focusing on certain bodies as the physical and metaphorical bearers of the nation, my research shows how the reproduction of identity is a responsibility shared (unequally) across genders and that reproducing the nation is partly a matter of reproducing shared knowledge of family geographies over generations. At the same time, however, my research also demonstrates that discourses of gendered nationhood continue to operate in diasporic contexts albeit in a different way. The disconnection between religion and political activism experienced by Noura compared with her brother, Zaki, for example, dramatises the negotiation of ideas and practices of Palestinian/Muslim masculinity and femininity in diasporic contexts, which influences how people align themselves and understand their identities.

This raises issues for discourses of diasporic Palestinian identity not least because my research reveals a wider range of ways in which Palestinian-ness is imagined, practised and debated among Palestinians than is often discussed. This diversity of voices discussing the politics of Palestinian identity in Britain problematises dominant narratives that would place Palestine at the centre of such identities. This is not to say that Palestine is dismissed or that people's connections to it are a fabrication. Rather that the meaningfulness of Palestine is articulated in family relationships and domestic spaces *as well as* through public, nationalistic and political affiliations. Moreover, this research shows that the meaning of Palestine exists alongside and in relation to other meaningful places (Britain, various houses, locations of family) and people (Arabs, Muslims, scattered family, political activists) elsewhere in the world.

Beyond these contributions to debates around Palestinian identity, this thesis also has implications for understandings of home, family and identity in diasporic contexts

and for an integrated approach to these issues. Indeed, a central achievement of this thesis is to demonstrate how diasporic meanings of home, family and identity can be productively approached from multiple perspectives simultaneously. For example, I have considered home as lived domestic spaces and material cultures *in conjunction with* important emotional relationships over distance and abstract ideas of place-based belonging. Likewise, I have addressed family in terms of reproducing relatedness through practices of long-distance communication and visiting that work *in concert with* ideals of domestic family intimacy, practices of social relatedness and place-based identity. Lastly, I have shown that collective identity is partly formed through narratives of home and homeland *as well as* through configurations of domestic space, practices of language and socialising, and feelings of familial and social relatedness.

Pursuing home, family and identity from these multiple perspectives reveals their crucial interrelationships in diasporic contexts and generates new insights into their meanings. Firstly, while my work adds to arguments for home as a spatial imaginary conjuring feelings of comfort, security and belonging that may coincide with domestic space but also involve meaningful relationships over distance (see Blunt and Dowling 2006), I also suggest that home can be a sense of purposeful dwelling. That is, home can be a mode of being in the world that is personally significant – having emerged from, for example, spiritual belief, political conviction or intellectual passion – but is oriented towards reworking, challenging or promoting dominant social or ideological discourses. This directional mode of being is marked in various ways, sometimes by mobilising or reconfiguring domestic space, sometimes by aligning oneself in a particular way with family, or by asserting certain identities over others.

Secondly, my work contributes to arguments about cultures and geographies of relatedness, particularly the spatial politics of intimacy and familial belonging (Edwards and Strathern 2000; Nash 2008). However, I take these arguments further by emphasising the importance of family as itself a coordinate of place-based identity *and* a kind of social geography. By this I mean that family belonging can act as a rooting mechanism, both in terms of linking dispersed individuals into networks of kin and of situating those diffuse networks in specific ancestral and homeland locations. In turn, these family geographies encode historic social geographies that provide the substance of diasporic relatedness and practices of collective belonging. In this way, although

conventional models of family may be challenged by new forms of kinship and cultures of relatedness emerging in diasporic contexts, established social politics of family and powerful connections with place may be simultaneously reinforced in the interests of diasporic relatedness and the ability to claim geographical belonging.

Thirdly, while my work corresponds with arguments for identities to be understood as personal and emotional processes that have collective and social currency beyond narratives of homeland and nation (Gilroy 1997; Hall 1990), I have demonstrated the importance of paying attention to how dominant modes of identity overlap in personally significant ways and to the performative cultures of social relatedness through which collective identities are forged. Put another way, my research shows that group belonging is forged through personal repertoires of affiliation that may involve, cross-cut and challenge dominant categories of identity. At the same time, however, it is possible to explore other kinds of group belonging beyond such dominant categories by paying attention to the mundane and detailed interpersonal connections among people; the meaningful gossip and social knowledge that claim no role in collective identity, even while performatively producing it.

Taken together, these new understandings of home, family and identity paint a rich portrait of what it means to 'be diasporic'. It is a portrait that challenges over-enthusiastic celebrations of diasporic life as uncoupling identity and place, arguing instead that diasporic life complicates rather than eradicates emplacement, and that it involves simultaneously material and imaginative modes of identification with people and places at a range of scales and distances. Such a portrait shows how shared histories, experiences and cultural codes continue to provide stable frames of reference (coordinates of home and identity) in the context of migration, while at the same time the meanings of these coordinates are being multiplied and ways of relating to them are being reworked. Three examples of this dialogue between stability and fluidity are homeland, language and family.

Firstly, with respect to homeland, it is clear that feelings of attachment to a land of origin remain important, whether for political reasons or ongoing family connections, and that such attachments may be reinforced by feelings of ancestral rootedness and memories of a specific place, such as a childhood house. However, migration introduces other places, other houses, other familial locations, other *homes* across which place-

based attachment must now be shared and this redistribution of affection can generate tension, particularly where there is a political desire for singular homeland identification. Secondly, I have shown the ongoing importance of languages as mechanisms of familial connection, cultural reproduction, and religious understanding, and that the work of inculcating languages often relies upon the exercise of some domestic disciplinary regime as well as formal schooling. Diasporic life can, however, complicate these processes of language learning and the relative importance of languages themselves, as those in mixed marriages make choices about which languages to pass on to their children and also as children construct their own personal networks in English. Thirdly, as I have shown, conventional formations of family can provide a sense of 'roots' and function as a mechanism of social relatedness in a diasporic context. At the same time, however, new configurations of family are being developed across dispersed kin networks and family itself is shifting in both meaning and emotional significance. This play of stability and fluidity, sameness and *différance*, can be a source of tension or outright conflict within a family grouping, as younger diasporic generations experience and interpret of family in new ways while their parents adhere to established models in their struggle to maintain a sense of cultural or familial heritage.

In advancing this portrait of diasporic life, I have demonstrated the diversity of experiences and perspectives fostered by dispersal and how this multiplicity functions in relation to established coordinates of identity. As such, my aim has not been to discard dominant discourses of identity in favour of radical and bewildering specificity and individualism, but to pay attention to a wider range of meaningful identities, considering how they challenge and rework, as well as rely upon, dominant coordinates of identity. Domestic spaces, familial relationships and social groups are vital frameworks for such a project, as they enable an intimate and intricate exploration of the diverse meanings of home, family and identity in dispersed lives.

Pursuing such a detailed exploration demands in-depth engagement both with and between the stories and perspectives of families *and* individuals. Interviewing several members of the same family together enables valuable insight into some of the contested dynamics of group identity formation. In the process, however, working with families groups introduces new relations of power and new positionalities for the

researcher. Establishing rapport within such a context involves supporting each group member while remaining overall group facilitator, but this delicate balance is easily complicated if tension arises within the group and support for one group member involves the betrayal of another. In short, the management of research relationships becomes an even more delicate operation in which the researcher herself is inextricably involved in potentially unexpected ways. Working with individuals involved a similarly complex process of establishing trust, negotiating position and handling tension. However, these interviews also enabled topics of home, family and identity to be explored in greater depth and with greater intensity than in group situations, eliciting insights into very personal experiences and perspectives that may not have emerged among other family members. Thinking individual and group research methods together in this way not only generates new insights into the politics of home, family and identity, but also emphasises broader arguments about the co-constitution of individual subjects and social groups, as well as the collaborative production of knowledge and memory I have discussed in this thesis.

These achievements must be weighed against the production of knowledge and constitution of subjects and groups within the research process itself and the overall success of my attempts to decolonise my research methodologies. In this project, decolonising methodologies included involving participants in initial aspects of the analytical process, and resisting the intellectual appropriation of participants' voices and homogenising constructions of 'Palestinians'. Although I retained most of the interpretive power, the cyclical character of the group interview process, with transcription and preliminary analysis feeding into subsequent interviews, introduced a degree of participatory knowledge-production, as my interpretations were challenged, reworked or endorsed by participants in subsequent interviews. The achievements of this thesis regarding the intellectual appropriation of participants' voices and homogenising constructions of 'Palestinians' were more mixed. In one sense, this project did not overcome the circularity of investigating the construction of 'being Palestinian' by inviting the participation of those already identifying as Palestinian. In another sense, however, I have effectively challenged homogenising constructions of 'Palestinians' through my detailed engagement with participants' stories and my approach to representation. Of course, these representations remain mediated by my

interpretive and editorial choices; to argue otherwise would be a god trick. However, the complexity of the stories I have told and the depth in which I have explored them forms a crucial resistance to homogenisations of diasporic experience and identity.

The future directions of this research are two-fold. The first would be a specific extension of this project and involves exploring the significance of the question *'min daar miin?'* across different social groups and in different geographical contexts. This research has been concentrated on the experiences of a largely middle-class, professional group of Palestinians living in Britain among whom *'min daar miin?'* is, as I have shown, a key mechanism of geographical and social positioning. However, it is important to consider if and how this question retains this specific relevance among different socio-economic classes who have followed other migration routes. Moreover, it is important to consider how diasporic life may have influenced the meaning of the question *'min daar miin?'* itself as well as its associated geographies, and how this relates to the changes in family taking place under occupation, as demonstrated by Taraki (2006a), and also among Palestinians in Israel. A second, broader direction of this research would be to explore the dynamics of *not* identifying. Considerable academic attention is paid to the production of identity and this thesis has sought to contribute to that body of work. However, as discussed above, a key obstacle to my research has been the circularity of critically interrogating an identity to which participants already subscribe. It therefore seems appropriate to also research the dynamics 'dis-identity': what happens when one or many coordinates of identity, such as nationality, culture or religion, are rejected or simply not maintained?; what feelings and experiences is such a rejection based upon?; what other coordinates of identity, if any, are mobilised in their stead?; and what are the implications of dis-identity for family and social relationships?

All of these future directions seek to raise questions that build on those of home, family, identity and diasporic life explored in this thesis. In pursuing this further research I will maintain my commitment to the intellectual, ethical and political values that have both shaped and motivated *'daar al Falastini'*. Commitments to the representation of diverse perspectives with reflexivity, honesty and humour; to engage with participants' lives and experiences in a manner that honours their generosity of spirit, time and hospitality; and to telling stories that bring people, places and ideas to life.

APPENDIX A: TRANSLITERATION AND GLOSSARY

Notes on transliteration

Based on Tawfiq Canaan (1933) and *Colloquial Arabic I* (Birzeit University 1999).

th	e.g. *th*eory, *th*in
j	e.g. *j*ourney, mea*s*ure
Ħ/ħ	Spoken with a slight hiss, like a snake
kh	e.g. Scottish lo*ch*, or German *ich*
dh	e.g. *th*e, *th*at, *th*ough, mo*th*er
Ŝ/ŝ	Emphatic 's', sounded towards back of throat
Đ/đ	Emphatic 'd' " " " "
Ŧ/ŧ	Emphatic 'T' " " " "
Ż/ż	Emphatic 'Z' " " " "
Ă/ă	Guttural 'a' (no Indo-Germanic equivalent)
gh	French 'r' preceded by 'g'
Q/q	Like 'ck' in ki*ck*, sounded at back of throat
'	Glottal stop, e.g. uh-oh

Long vowels

aa	'aah'
ii, ee	'ee'
oo, ou	'oo'

All other letters (a, b, t, h, d, r, z, s, f, k, l, m, n, w, y) pronounced as in English.

Glossary of key terms

al	the, of
ăyleh	immediate family
ămiyeh	colloquial Arabic (Eastern)
balad	cultural homeland or territory
beit	house, family
bilaad ish-sham	Ottoman region covering the Eastern Mediterranean
bint	daughter
daar	family, house
diwan	guest-room or guest-house (singular)
Falastini	Palestinians
fil beit	at home/in the house
fus'ha	Modern Standard Arabic
ghourba	absence from the homeland, banishment, exile
ħamouleh	clan
intifada	Palestinian uprising (singular)
liwan	long central hallway and seating area
mađafeh	guest house (singular)
min daar miin?	which family are you from?
naarii	'Jerusalem' stone
al Nakba	The Catastrophe' of 1948
al Quds	Jerusalem
shatat	scattering, dispersal (possibly an adaptation of 'diaspora')
watan	political or national homeland

APPENDIX B: MAP OF PALESTINE

Figure 3: Map of Palestine (1946)

Shows districts and district centres under the British Mandate

[Source: www.palestineremembered.com]

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW THEMES

Interview 1: Family

FAMILY GEOGRAPHY

- Migration stories of immediate family and other relatives
- Strategies of keeping in touch with family members elsewhere
- Influence of living in Britain on family relationships

MAKING/TELLING/PRACTICING FAMILY

- What makes people family
- Senses of heritage/roots in relation to family
- Values and traditions associated with and passed on through family

IDEAS OF FAMILY

- Personal meaning of family
- Varying ideas of family among relatives of different ages and genders
- Challenges to family of living in Britain
- Family and Palestinian identity
- A family 'home'?

Interview 2: House/home

FAMILY HOUSE

- Stories of different houses
- Feelings about current house
- Role of house in social life

IDEAS/LANGUAGE OF HOME

- Difference between 'a house' and 'a home'
- Experiences of not feeling at home
- Speaking about feeling at home in Arabic

PRACTICES/RELATIONSHIPS/SPACES OF HOME

- Activities contributing to feelings of home
- People who contribute to feelings of home
- Places that feeling like home
- Importance of home to family's sense of identity

Interview 3: 'Community'

ANCESTRAL GEOGRAPHY

- *Min daar miin?*
- Family geographies of Palestine

WIDER COMMUNITY NETWORKS

- Feelings of belonging to a 'community'
- Role of Arabic school in feelings of 'community'
- Importance of belonging to 'community'

A PALESTINIAN COMMUNITY IN BRITAIN?

- Experience of 'Palestinian community' in Britain
- Similarities/differences in cultures of home and family

IDEAS OF PALESTINIAN-NESS

- Commonly-held ideas or expectations of what it means to be a Palestinian
- Meeting or failing to meet expectations

BIBLIOGRAPHY

AbdulGhani, D. 2005. 'Caught between two worlds: the case of the Palestinian community in Sweden'. In Shiblak, A. (ed) *The Palestinian Diaspora in Europe: Challenges of Dual Identity and Adaptation*. Refugee and Diaspora Studies, No. 2. Ramallah: Institute of Jerusalem Studies and Shaml, pp 43-50.

Abdulhadi, R. 2003. 'Where is home? Fragmented lives, border crossings, and the politics of exile'. *Radical History Review* 86: 89-101.

Abdulrahim, D. 1996. 'Defining gender in a second exile: Palestinian women in West Berlin'. In Buijs, A. (ed) *Migrant Women: Crossing Boundaries and Changing Identities*. Oxford: Berg, pp 55-82.

Abowd, T. 2007. 'National boundaries, colonized spaces: the gendered politics of residential life in contemporary Jerusalem'. *Anthropological Quarterly* 80: 997-1034.

Abu-Lughod, I. 2000. 'Palestinian higher education: national identity, liberation, and globalization'. *Boundary 2* 27: 75-95.

Abu-Sitta, S. H. 2007. *The Return Journey: A Guide to the Depopulated and Present Palestinian Towns and Villages and Holy Sites*. London: Palestine Land Society.

Ahmed, S. and Fortier, A-M. 2003. 'Re-imagining communities'. *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 6: 251-259.

Ahmed, S., Castañeda, C., Fortier, A-M., and Sheller, M. (eds). 2003. *Uprootings/Regroundings: Questions of Home and Migration*. Oxford and New York, NY: Berg.

Al-Ali, N. and Koser, K (eds). 2002. *New Approaches to Migration? Transnational Communities and the Transformation of Home*. London and New York, NY: Routledge.

Alexander, C., Edwards, R., and Temple, B. 2007. 'Contesting cultural communities: language, ethnicity and citizenship in Britain'. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 33: 783-800.

Alleyne, B. 2002. 'An idea of community and its discontents: towards a more reflexive sense of belonging in multicultural Britain'. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 25: 607-627.

Al-Shahi, A. 1986. '"Welcome, my house is yours": values related to the Arab house'. In Hyland, A.D.C. and Al-Shahi, A. (eds). *The Arab House*. Centre for Architectural Research and Development Overseas: University of Newcastle upon Tyne, pp 25-60.

Amireh, A. 2003. 'Between complicity and subversion: body politics in Palestinian national narrative'. *South Atlantic Quarterly* 102: 747-772.

Anabtawi, S. N. 1986. *Palestinian Higher Education in the West Bank and Gaza*. London: KPI.

Anderson, B. 1991. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. London and New York, NY: Verso.

Ansari, H. 2004. *The Infidel Within: Muslims in Britain Since 1800*. London: Hurst and Co.

Ata, I. W. 1986. *The West Bank Palestinian Family*. London: KPI.

Awde, N. and Smith, K. 2004. *Arabic Dictionary*. London: Bennett and Bloom.

Baldassar, L. 2008. 'Missing kin and longing to be together: emotions and the construction of co-presence in transnational relationships'. *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 29: 247-266.

Ballis Lal, B. 2001. 'Learning to do ethnic identity: the transracial/transethnic adoptive family as site and context'. In Parker, D. and Song, M. (eds) *Rethinking 'Mixed Race'*. London and Sterling, VA: Pluto Press, pp154-172.

Bardenstein, C. 1998. 'Threads of memory and discourses of rootedness: of trees, oranges and the prickly-pear cactus in Israel/Palestine'. *Edebiyât* 8: 1-36.

Barthes, R. 1981. *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. New York, NY: Hill and Wang.

Bauman, Z. 2001. *Community: Seeking Safety in an Insecure World*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bell, S. and Coleman, S. (eds). 1999. *The Anthropology of Friendship*. Oxford and New York, NY: Berg.

Benjamin, W. 1968. *Illuminations*. New York, NY: Schocken Books. (Trans. H. Zohn.)

Bhabha, H. 1994. *The Location of Culture*. London and New York, NY: Routledge.

Bishara, A. 2003. 'House and homeland: examining sentiments about and claims to Jerusalem and its houses'. *Social Text* 21: 141-162.

Blunt, A. 2005a. *Domicile and Diaspora: Anglo-Indian Women and the Spatial Politics of Home*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Blunt, A. 2005b. 'Cultural geography: cultural geographies of home'. *Progress in Human Geography* 29: 505-515.

Blunt, A. and Dowling, R. 2006. *Home*. London and New York, NY: Routledge.

Blunt, A. and McEwan, C. 2002. 'Introduction'. In Blunt, A. and McEwan, C. (eds) *Postcolonial Geographies*. New York, NY and London: Continuum, pp 1-6.

Blunt, A. and Varley, A. 2004. 'Geographies of home'. *Cultural Geographies* 11: 3-6.

Bougdah, H. and Sharples, S. 2010. *Environment, Technology and Sustainability.* Technologies of Architecture Vol. 2. Abindgon: Taylor and Francis.

Bourdieu, P. 2000. *Pascalian Meditations*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Brah, A. 1996. *Cartographies of Diaspora*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Brand, L. A. 1988. *Palestinians in the Arab World: Institution Building and the Search for State*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Browne, K. 2005. 'Snowball sampling: using social networks to research non-heterosexual women'. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 8: 47-60.

Brubaker, R. 2005. 'The "diaspora" diaspora'. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28: 1-19.

Bryden, I. 2004. '"There is no outer without inner space": constructing the haveli as home'. *Cultural Geographies* 11: 26-41.

Butcher, M. 2008. 'FOB boys, VCs and habibs: using language to navigate difference and belonging in culturally diverse Sydney'. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 34: 371-387.

Butler, J. 1999. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Butler, K. 2001. 'Defining diaspora, refining a discourse'. *Diaspora* 10: 189-219.

Cairns, S. (ed) 2004. *Drifting: Architecture and Migrancy*. London and New York, NY: Routledge.

Cameron, J. 2000. 'Focussing on the focus group'. In Hay, I. (ed) *Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography*. Oxford: Open University Press, pp 83-102.

Canaan, T. 1933. *The Palestinian Arab House: Its Architecture and Folklore*. Jerusalem: Syrian Orphanage Press.

Cape, M. 2002. 'Feminist epistemology in geography'. In Moss, P. (ed) *Feminist Geography in Practice: Research and Methods*. Oxford and Malden MA: Blackwell, pp 43-56.

Carrier, J. G. 1999. 'People who can be friends: selves and social relationships'. In Bell, S. and Coleman, S. (eds) *The Anthropology of Friendship*. Oxford and New York, NY: Berg, pp 21-38.

Carsten, J. (ed) 2000. *Cultures of Relatedness: New Approaches to the Study of Kinship*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Carsten, J. 2004. *After Kinship*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Carter, S. 2005. 'The geopolitics of diaspora' *Area* 37: 54-63.

Chakrabarty, D. 2000. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Chamberlain, M. 1995. 'Family narratives and migration dynamics: Barbadians to Britain'. *New West Indies Guide/Nieuwe West-Indische Gids* 69: 253-275.

Chamberlain, M. 2003. 'Rethinking Caribbean families: extending the links. *Community, Work and Family* 6: 63-76.

Christie, M. E. 2006. 'Kitchenspace: gendered territory in central Mexico'. *Gender, Place and Culture* 13: 653-661.

Clifford, J. 1997. *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Cloke, P., Cook, I., Crang, P., Goodwin, M., Painter, J. and Philo, C. 2004 *Practising Human Geography*. London: Sage.

Cohen, R. 1997. *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*. Oxen: Routledge.

Conradson, D. and Latham, A. 2005. 'Friendship, networks and transnationality in a world city: Antipodean transmigrants in London'. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 31: 287-305.

Cooper Marcus, C. 1995. *House as a Mirror of Self: Exploring the Deeper Meaning of Home*. Berkeley, CA: Conari Press.

Cornwall, A. and Jewkes, R. 1995. 'What is participatory research?' *Social Science and Medicine* 41: 1667-1675.

Cox, J. and Connell, J. 2003. 'Place, exile and identity: the contemporary experience of Palestinians in Sydney'. *Australian Geographer* 34: 329-343.

Creese, G., Dyck, I., and McLaren, A. 1999. 'Reconstituting the family: negotiating immigration and settlement'. *Research on Immigration and Integration in the Metropolis.* Working Paper Series No. 99-10. Vancouver: Vancouver Centre of Excellence.

Dar Al-Majoumi. 2007. *Pocket Dictionary: English-Arabic*. S.A.L.: Beirut.

Darwish, M. 1970. 'Lover from Palestine'. In Al Messiri, A. W. (ed) *A Lover from Palestine and Other Poems: An Anthology of Palestinian Poetry*. Washington DC: Free Palestine Press.

Datta, A. 2008. 'Architecture of low-income widow housing: "spatial opportunities" in Madipur, West Delhi'. *Cultural Geographies* 15: 255-260.

Davis, R. 2007. 'Mapping the past, re-creating the homeland'. In Sa'di, A. and Abu Lughod, L. (eds) *Nakba: Palestine, 1948 and the Claims of Memory*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, pp 53-75.

Dohmen, R. 2004. 'The home in the world: women, threshold designs and performative relations in contemporary Tamil Nadu, South India'. *Cultural Geographies* 11: 7-25.

Domosh, M. 1998. 'Geography and gender: home again?' *Progress in Human Geography* 22: 276-282.

Doumani, B. 1995. *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700-1900*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

Doumani, B. (ed) 2003. *Family History in the Middle East: Household, Property and Gender*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Dowling, R. 2000. 'Power, subjectivity and ethics in qualitative research'. In Hay, I. (ed) *Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography*. Oxford: Open University Press, pp 23-36.

Duncan, S. and Smith, D. 2002. 'Geographies of family formations: spatial differences and gender cultures in Britain'. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 27: 471-493.

Dunn, K. 2000. 'Interviewing'. In Hay, I. (ed) *Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp 50-82.

Dwyer, C. 2002. '"Where are you from?" Young British Muslim women and the making of "home"'. In Blunt, A. and McEwan, C. (eds) *Postcolonial Geographies*. New York, NY and London: Continuum, pp 184-199.

Dwyer, C. and Limb, M. 2001. 'Introduction: doing qualitative research in geography'. In Limb, M. and Dwyer, C. (eds) *Qualitative Methodologies for Geographers: Issues and Debates.* London: Arnold, pp 1-20.

Edwards, A. M. 1981. *The Design of Suburbia: A Critical Study in Environmental History*. London: Pembridge Press.

Edwards, J. and Strathern, M. 2000. 'Including our own'. In Carsten, J. (ed) *Cultures of Relatedness: New Approaches to the Study of Kinship*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp 149-166.

Elias, E. A. 1913. *The New Dictionary: English-Arabic*. Cairo: E. A. Elias.

England, K. V. L. 1994. 'Getting personal: reflexivity, positionality and feminist research'. *Professional Geographer* 46: 80-89.

Escobar, A. 1994. 'Welcome to cyberia: notes on the anthropology of cyberculture'. *Current Anthropology* 35: 56-76.

Escribano, M. 1987. *The Endurance of the Olive Tree: Tradition and Identity in Two West Bank Palestinian Villages*. PhD thesis, Harvard University.

Farsoun, S. 1973. 'Student protests and the coming crisis in Lebanon'. *Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP) Reports* 19: 3-14.

Feghali, E. 1997. 'Arab cultural communication patterns'. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 21: 345-378.

Fincher, R. 2004. 'Gender and life course in the narratives of Melbourne's high-rise housing developers'. *Australian Geographical Studies* 42: 325-338.

Fitzgerald, P. 2008. 'Exploring transnational and diasporic families through the Irish Emigration Database'. *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 29: 267-281.

Fortier, A-M. 1999. 'Re-membering places and the performance of belonging(s)'. *Theory, Culture and Society* 16: 41-64.

Fortier, A-M. 2000. *Migrant Belongings: Memory, Space, Identity*. Oxford: Berg.

Foucault, M. 1997. *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-1976*. New York, NY: Picador. (Trans. David Macey.)

Franklin, S. and McKinnon, S. (eds) 2001. *Relative Values: Reconfiguring Kinship Studies*. Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press.

Galvin, K-L. 2001. 'Schneider revisited: sharing and ratification in the construction of kinship'. In Stone, L. (ed) *New Directions in Anthropological Kinship*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, pp 109-124.

Ghabra, S. N. 1987. *Palestinians in Kuwait: The Family and the Politics of Survival*. Boulder, CO and London: Westview Press.

Gibb, C. and Rothenberg, C. 2000. 'Believing women: Harari and Palestinian women at home in the diaspora'. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 20: 243-259.

Gilroy, P. 1994. 'Diaspora'. *Paragraph* 17: 207-212.

Gilroy, P. 1997. 'Diaspora and the detours of identity'. In Woodward, K. (ed) *Identity and Difference*. London: Sage, pp 299-343.

Gilroy, P. 2003. 'Where ignorant armies clash by night: homogeneous community and the planetary aspect'. *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 6: 261-276.

Graham, S. 2004. 'Constructing urbicide by bulldozer in the Occupied Territories'. In Graham, S. (ed) *Cities, War and Terrrorism*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp192-213.

Gregory, D. 2000. 'Structuralism'. In Johnston, R. J., Gregory, D., Pratt, G., and Watts, M. (eds) *The Dictionary of Human Geography*. Fourth Edition. Oxford and Malden, MA: Blackwell, pp 797-798.

Grosz, E. 1993. 'Bodies and knowledges: feminism and the crisis of reason'. In Alcoff, L. and Potter, E. (eds) *Feminist Epistemologies*. New York, NY: Routledge, pp 187-125.

Gunaratnam, Y. 2003. *Researching 'Race' and Ethnicity: Methods, Knowledge and Power*. London: Sage.

Hage, G. 1996. 'The spatial imaginary of national practices: dwelling - domesticating/being – exterminating'. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 14: 463-485.

Haj, S. 1992. 'Palestinian women and patriarchal relations'. *Signs* 17: 761-778.

Hall, S. 1990. 'Cultural identity and diaspora'. In Rutherford, J. (ed) *Identity: Community, Culture and Difference*. London: Lawrence and Wishart, pp 222-237.

Hall, S. 1996. 'Introduction: who needs identity?' In Hall, S. and Du Gay, P. (eds) *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: Sage, pp 1-17.

Hammad, S. 1996. *Born Palestinian, Born Black*: New York, NY and London: Harlem River Press.

Hammer, J. 2005. *Palestinians Born in Exile: Diaspora and the Search for a Homeland*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Hanafi, S. 2005. 'Reshaping geography: Palestinian community networks in Europe and the new media'. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 31: 581-598.

Haraway, D. J. 1991. *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York, NY and London: Routledge.

Haraway, D. J. 1997. *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium.FemaleMan©_Meets_Onco-Mouse™: Feminism and Technoscience*. New York, NY and London: Routledge.

Harik, I. 1986. 'The Palestinians in the diaspora'. In Sheffer, G. (ed) *Modern Diasporas in International Politics*. New York, NY: St Martin's Press, pp 315-332.

Harker, C. 2009. 'Spacing Palestine through the home'. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 34: 320-332.

Hasso, F. S. 1998. 'The "women's front" - nationalism, feminism, and modernity in Palestine'. *Gender and Society* 12: 441-465.

Helmreich, S. 1993. 'Kinship, nation and Paul Gilroy's concept of diaspora'. *Diaspora* 2: 243-249.

Hetherington, K. 1998. *Expressions of Identity: Space, Performance, Politics*. London, Thousand Oaks, CA and New Delhi: Sage.

Hirsch, M. 1997. *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory*. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press.

Hirst, D. 2003. *The Gun and the Olive Branch: The Roots of Violence in the Middle East*. New York, NY: Nation Books.

Hoggart, K., Lees, L., and Davies, A. 2002. *Researching Human Geography*. London: Arnold.

Holstein, J. A. and Gubrium, J. F. 2004. 'The active interview'. In Silverman, D. (ed) *Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice*. Second Edition. London: Sage, pp 140-160.

Holy, L. 1996. *Anthropological Perspectives on Kinship*. London and Sterling, VA: Pluto Press.

Hopkins, N. S. and Ibrahim, S. E. (eds) 2007. *Arab Society: Class, Gender, Power and Development*. Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press.

Ingraham, C. 2004. 'Architecture as evidence'. In Cairns, S. (ed) *Drifting: Architecture and Migrancy*. London and New York, NY: Routledge, pp 61-81.

Jayyusi, S. K. 2005. *Modern Arabic Fiction: An Anthology*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Johnson, L. C. 2006. 'Browsing the modern kitchen – a feast of gender, place and culture (part 1)'. *Gender, Place and Culture* 13: 123-132.

Johnston, L. and Valentine, G. 1995. 'Wherever I lay my girlfriend, that's my home: the performance and surveillance of lesbian identities in domestic environments'. In Bell, D. and Valentine, G. (eds) *Mapping Desire*. London: Routledge, pp 88-103.

Kalra, V., Kaur, R., and Hutnyk, J. 2005. *Diaspora and Hybridity*. London, Thousand Oaks, CA and New Delhi: Sage.

Kanaaneh, R. A. 2002. *Birthing the Nation: Strategies of Palestinian Women in Israel*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Kaplan, A. 2002. *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Karmi, G. 1999. 'After the Nakba: An experience of exile in England'. *Journal of Palestine Studies* 28: 52-63.

Karmi, G. 2002. *In search of Fatima: A Palestinian Story*. London and New York, NY: Verso.

Kearns, R. A. 2000. 'Being there: research through observing and participating'. In Hay, I. (ed) *Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp 103-121.

Khalidi, R. 1997. *Palestinian Identity: The Making of a Modern National Consciousness*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Khalidi, W. (ed) 1992. *All that Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948.* Washington DC: Institute for Palestine Studies.

Khalili, L. 2007. *Heroes and Martyrs of Palestine: The Politics of National Commemoration*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Laurier, E. 2001. 'Why people say where they are during mobile phone calls'. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 19: 485-504.

Laurier, E. 2003. 'Participant observation'. In Clifford, N. J. and Valentine, G. (eds) *Key Methods in Geography*. London: Sage, pp 133-146.

Lefebvre, H. 1991. *The Production of Space*. Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell. (Trans. D. Nicholson-Smith.)

Legg, S. 2003. 'Gendered politics and nationalized homes: women and the anti-colonial struggle in Delhi, 1930-47'. *Gender, Place and Culture* 10: 7-27.

Levitt, P. 2002. 'The ties that change: relations to the ancestral home over the life cycle'. In Levitt, P. and Waters, M. C. (eds) *The Changing Face of Home: The Transnational Lives of the Second Generation*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation, pp 123-144.

Licoppe, C. 2004. '"Connected" presence: the emergence of a new repertoire for managing social relationships in a change communication technoscape'. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 22: 135-156.

Lindholm Schulz, H. 2003. *The Palestinian Diaspora: Formation of Identities and Politics of Homeland*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Llewellyn, M. 2004. '"Urban village" or "white house": envisioned spaces, experienced places, and everyday life at Kendal House, London in the 1930s'. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 22: 229-249.

Long, H. 1993. *The Edwardian House*. Manchester and New York, NY: Manchester University Press.

Long, J. C. 2006. *A Particularly Political Diaspora: Palestinian Student Activism in the UK*. MA dissertation, Queen Mary, University of London.

Long, J. C. 2009. 'Rooting diaspora, reviving nation: Zionist landscapes of Palestine-Israel'. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 34: 61-77.

Longhurst, R. 2003. 'Semi-structured interviews and focus groups'. In Clifford, N. J. and Valentine, G. (eds) *Key Methods in Geography*. London: Sage, pp 117-132.

Mahmoud, L. 2005. 'British Palestinians: the transformation of an exiled community'. In Shiblak, A. (ed) *The Palestinian Diaspora in Europe: Challenges of Dual Identity and Adaptation*. Refugee and Diaspora Studies, No. 2. Ramallah: Institute of Jerusalem Studies and Shaml, pp 98-108.

Malinowski, B. 1913. *The family among Australian Aborigines*. London: Hodder.

Malkki, L. 1992. 'National Geographic: The rooting of peoples and the territorialization of national identity among scholars and refugees'. *Cultural Anthropology* 7: 24-44.

Mason, V. 2007. 'Children of the "idea of Palestine": negotiating identity, belonging and home in the Palestinian diaspora'. *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 28: 271-285.

Matar, D. 2005. *News, Memory, Identity: The Palestinians in Britain*. PhD Thesis, The London School of Economics and Political Science.

Matar, D. 2006. 'Diverse diasporas, one meta-narrative: Palestinians in the UK talking about 11 September 2001'. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 32: 1027-1040.

Mavroudi, E. 2005. *Palestinian 'identities' in Athens: negotiating hybridity, politicisation and citizenship*. PhD thesis, University of Durham.

Mavroudi, E. 2007. 'Learning to be Palestinian in Athens: constructing national identities in diaspora'. *Global Networks* 7: 392-411.

Mavroudi, E. 2008. 'Palestinians in diaspora, empowerment and informal political – space'. *Political Geography* 27: 57-73.

Mavroudi, E. 2010. 'Contesting identities, differences and a unified Palestinian community'. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 28: 239-253

McClintock, A. 1995. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. New York, NY: Routledge.

McDowell, L. 1992. 'Doing gender: feminism, feminists and research methods in human geography'. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 17: 399-416.

McEwan, C. 2003. 'Material geographies and postcolonialism'. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 24: 340-355.

Miller, D. (ed) 2001a. *Home Possessions: Material Culture Behind Closed Doors*. Oxford and New York, NY: Berg.

Miller, D. 2001b. 'Behind closed doors'. In Miller, D. (ed). *Home Possessions: Material Culture Behind Closed Doors*. Oxford and New York, NY: Berg, pp 1-19.

Mitchell, K. 1997. 'Different diasporas and the hype of hybridity'. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 15: 533-553.

Mohammad, R. 2001. '"Insiders" and/or "outsiders": positionality, theory and praxis'. In Limb, M. and Dwyer, C. (eds) *Qualitative Methodologies for Geographers: Issues and Debates*. London: Arnold, pp 101-117.

Mohanty, C. T. 1991. 'Under western eyes: feminist scholarship and colonial discourses'. In Mohanty, C. T., Russo, A. and Torres, L. (eds) *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*. Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, pp 51-80.

Moors, A. 2000 'Embodying the nation: Maha Saca's post-*intifada* postcards'. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 23: 871-887.

Morris, B. 1987. *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Morris, B. 2004. *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nagel, C. 2001. 'Hidden minorities and the politics of "race": the case of British Arab activists in London'. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 27: 381-400.

Nagel, C. 2005. 'Skilled migration in global cities from "Other" perspectives: British Arabs, identity politics and local embeddedness'. *Geoforum* 26: 197-210.

Nagel, C. R. and Staeheli, L. A. 2004. 'Citizenship, identity and transnational migration: Arab immigrants to the United States' *Space and Polity* 8: 3-23.

Nash, C. 2003. '"They're family!": Cultural geographies of relatedness in popular genealogy'. In Ahmed, S., Castañeda, C., Fortier, A-M., and Sheller, M. (eds) *Uprootings/Regroundings: Questions of Home and Migration*. Oxford: Berg, pp 179-203.

Nash, C. 2005. 'Geographies of relatedness'. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 30: 449-462.

Nash, C. 2008. *Of Irish descent: Origin Stories, Genealogy, and the Politics of Belonging*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

Nippa, A. 2003. 'A country luxury: a trip into everyday life in the Arab world'. In Kries, M. and von Vegesack, A. (eds). *Living Under the Crescent Moon: Domestic Culture in the Arab World*. Weil am Rhein: Vitra Design Stiftung, pp 128-167.

Nofal, M., Turki, F., Shafi, H. A., Bushnaq, I., Sayigh, Y., Al-Hout, S., Jayyusi, S. K., Budeiri, M. 1998. 'Reflections on Al-Nakba'. *Journal of Palestine Studies* 28: 5-35.

Noor, M. 1986. 'The function and form of the courtyard house'. In Hyland, A.D.C. and Al-Shahi, A. (eds) *The Arab House*. Centre for Architectural Research and Development Overseas: University of Newcastle upon Tyne, pp 61-72.

Pahl, R. 2000. *On Friendship*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Pain, R. and Francis, P. 2003. 'Reflections on participatory research'. *Area* 35: 46-54.

Panakagos, A. N. and Horst, H. A. 2006. 'Return to cyberia: technology and the social worlds of transnational migrants'. *Global Networks* 6: 109-124.

Parr, J. 1999. *Domestic Goods: the Material, the Moral, and the Economic in the Postwar Years.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Parreñas, R. 2005. 'Long distance intimacy: class, gender and intergenerational relations between mothers and children in Filipino transnational families'. *Global Networks* 5: 317-336.

Percival, J. 2002. 'Domestic spaces: uses and meanings in the daily lives of older people'. *Ageing and Society* 22: 729-749.

Peretz, D. 1986. *The West Bank: History, Politics, Society and Economy*. Boulder, CO: Westview.

Peteet, J. 1994. 'Male gender and rituals of resistance in the Palestinian 'intifada': a cultural politics of violence'. *American Ethnologist* 21: 31-49.

Peteet, J. 1997. 'Icons and militants: mothering in the danger zone'. *Signs* 23: 103-129.

Philo, G. and Berry, M. 2004. *Bad News from Israel.* Glasgow University Media Group. London: Pluto Press.

Portes, A. and Rumbaut, R. G. 2001. *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

Pratt, G. 1998. 'Geographic metaphors in feminist theory'. In Aiken, S. H., Brigham, A., Marston, S. A., and Waterstone, P. (eds) *Making Worlds: Gender, Metaphor and Materiality*. Tuscon, AZ: University of Arizona Press, pp 13-30.

Pratt, G. 1999. 'From registered nurse to registered nanny: discursive geographies of Filipina domestic workers in Vancouver, BC'. *Economic Geography* 75: 215-236.

Pratt, G. 2000. 'Post-structuralism'. In Johnston, R. J., Gregory, D., Pratt, G., and Watts, M. (eds) *The Dictionary of Human Geography*. Fourth Edition. Oxford and Malden, MA: Blackwell, pp 625-627.

Pratt, G. 2002. 'Studying immigrants in focus groups'. In Moss, P. (ed) *Feminist Geography in Practice: Research and Methods*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, pp 214-229.

Pratt, G. 2004. 'Feminist geographies: spatialising feminist politics'. In Cloke, P., Crang, P. and Goodwin, M. (eds) *Envisioning Human Geography*. London: Arnold, pp 128-145.

Pratt, G. with UNKPSC/FCYA. 2003. 'Between homes: Displacement and belonging for second-generation Filipino-Canadian youths'. *BC Studies* 140: 41-68.

Rabinowitz, D. 2000. 'Postnational Palestine/Israel? Globalization, diaspora, transnationalism, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict'. *Critical Inquiry* 26: 757-772.

Ramadan, A. 2009. 'A refugee landscape: writing Palestinian nationalisms in Lebanon'. *ACME* 8: 69-99.

Ramazanoglu, C. (with J. Holland) 2002. *Feminist Methodologies: Challenges and Choices*. London: Sage.

Rapport, N. and Dawson, A. (eds) 1998. *Migrants of Identity: Perceptions of Home in a World of Movement*. Oxford: Berg.

Revill, G. 1993. 'Reading *Rosehill*: community, identity and inner-city Derby'. In Keith, M. and Pile, S. (eds) *Place and the Politics of Identity*. London and New York, NY: Routledge, pp 117-140.

Robson, E. 2006. 'The "kitchen" as women's space in rural Hausaland, northern Nigeria'. *Gender, Place and Culture* 13: 669-676.

Rose, G. 1997. 'Situating knowledges: positionality, reflexivities and other tactics'. *Progress in Human Geography* 21: 305-320.

Rose, G. 2003. 'Family photographs and domestic spacings: a case study'. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 28: 5-18.

Roseneil, S. 1993. 'Greenham revisited: researching myself and my sisters'. In Hobbs, D. and May, T. (eds) *Interpreting the Field: Accounts of Ethnography*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp 177-208.

Rothenberg, C. E. 1998/1999. 'A review of the anthropological literature in English on the Palestinian hamouleh and the status of women'. *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies* 2: 24-48.

Rumbaut, R. G. 2002. 'Severed or sustained attachments? Language, identity and imagined communities in the post-immigrant generation'. In Levitt, P. and Waters, M. C. (eds) *The Changing Face of Home: The Transnational Lives of the Second Generation*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation, pp 43-95

Sa'di, A. H. and Abu-Lughod, L. (eds). 2007. *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the Claims of Memory*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Saad, K. M. 1926. *Centennial English-Arabic Dictionary of the American Press*. Beirut: American Press.

Said, E. W. 1978. *Orientalism*. London: Vintage.

Said, E. W. 1984. 'Permission to narrate'. *Journal of Palestine Studies* 13: 27-48.

Said, E. W. 1992. *The Question of Palestine*. London: Vintage.

Salmoné, H. A. 1890. *An Arabic-English Dictionary on a New System*. London: Trübner and Co.

Sayigh, R. 1977. 'Palestinian identity among camp residents'. *Journal of Palestine Studies* 6: 3-22.

Sayigh, R. 1978. 'Struggle for survival – Economic conditions of Palestinian camp residents in Lebanon'. *Journal of Palestine Studies* 7: 101-119.

Sayigh, R. 2007. *The Palestinians: From Peasants to Revolutionaries*. London and New York, NY: Zed Books.

Schmidt, G. 2005. 'The transnational *umma* – myth or reality? Examples from Western diasporas'. *The Muslim World* 95: 575-586.

Schneider, D. 1984. *A Critique of the Study of Kinship*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Schroeder, K. 2006. 'A feminist examination of community kitchens in Peru and Bolivia'. *Gender, Place and Culture* 13: 663-668.

Sheffer, G. (ed) 1986a. *Modern Diasporas in International Politics*. New York, NY: St Martin's Press.

Sheffer, G. 1986b. 'Introduction'. In Sheffer, G. (ed) *Modern Diasporas in International Politics*. New York, NY: St Martin's Press, pp 1-15.

Sherwell, T. 1996. 'Palestinian costume, the Intifada and the gendering of nationalist discourse'. *Journal of Gender Studies* 5: 293-303.

Shiblak, A. (ed) 2005a. *The Palestinian Diaspora in Europe: Challenges of Dual Identity and Adaptation*. Refugee and Diaspora Studies, No. 2. Ramallah: Institute of Jerusalem Studies and Shaml.

Shiblak, A. 2005b. 'Introduction - reflections on the Palestinian diaspora in Europe'. In A. Shiblak (ed) *The Palestinian Diaspora in Europe: Challenges of Dual Identity*

and Adaptation. Refugee and Diaspora Studies, No. 2. Ramallah: Institute of Jerusalem Studies and Shaml, pp 7-18.

Sibley, D. 1995. *Geographies of Exclusion*. London and New York: Routledge.

Skelton, T. 2001. 'Cross-cultural research: issues of power, positionality and "race"'. In Limb, M. and Dwyer, C. (eds) *Qualitative Methodologies for Geographers: Issues and Debates*. London: Arnold, pp 87-100.

Skrbiš, Z. 2008. 'Transnational families: theorising migration, emotions and belonging'. *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 29: 231-246.

Skrbiš, Z., Baldassar, L. and Poynting, S. 2007. 'Introduction – negotiating belonging: migration and generations'. *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 28: 261-269.

Slyomovics, S. 1998. *The Object of Memory: Arab and Jew Narrate the Palestinian Village*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Smith, D. P. 2004. 'An "untied" research agenda for family migration: loosening the "shackles" of the past'. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 30: 263-282.

Smith, F. M. 2003. 'Working in different cultures'. In Clifford, N. J. and Valentine, G. (eds) *Key Methods in Geography*. London: Sage, pp 179-193.

Smith, L. T. 1999. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London and New York, NY: Zed Books.

Smith, P. A. 1984. *Palestine and the Palestinians 1876-1983*. New York, NY: St Martin's Press.

Smith, P. A. 1986. 'The Palestinian diaspora, 1948-1985'. *Journal of Palestine Studies* 15: 90-108.

Spivak, G. C. 1988. 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' In Nelson, C. and Grossberg, L. (eds) *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. New York, NY: Routledge, pp 271-313

Spivak, G. C. 1993. *Outside in the teaching machine*. London and New York, NY: Routledge.

Spivak, G. C. 1996. 'Subaltern talk: interview with the editors'. In Landry, D. and MacLean, G. (eds) *The Spivak Reader: Selected Works of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak.* New York, NY and London: Routledge, pp 287-308.

Stoler, A. L. 1995. *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Stone, L. 2001. (ed) *New Directions in Anthropological Kinship*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

Strum, P. 1998. 'West Bank women and the intifada: revolution within the revolution'. In Sabbagh, S. (ed) *Palestinian Women of Gaza and the West Bank*. Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, pp 63-77.

Supski, S. 2006. '"It was another skin": The kitchen as home for Australian post-war immigrant women'. *Gender, Place and Culture* 13: 133-141.

Svašek, M. (ed) 2008. 'Transnational Families: Emotions and Belonging'. Special issue of *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 29: 213-345.

Swedenburg, T. 1991. 'Popular Memory and the Palestinian National Past'. In O'Brien, J. and Roseberry, W. (eds) *Golden Ages, Dark Ages: Imagining the Past in Anthropology and History*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, pp 152-179.

Taraki, L. (ed) 2006a. *Living Palestine: Family Survival, Resistance and Mobility Under Occupation*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

Taraki, L. 2006b. 'Introduction'. In Taraki, L. (ed) *Living Palestine: Family Survival, Resistance and Mobility Under Occupation*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, pp xi-xxx.

Tarbush, J. A. 2005. 'The Palestinian community in Spain: past and present'. In Shiblak, A. (ed) *The Palestinian Diaspora in Europe: Challenges of Dual Identity and Adaptation*. Refugee and Diaspora Studies, No. 2. Ramallah: Institute of Jerusalem Studies and Shaml, pp 76-97.

Thapar-Bjorkert, S. 1997. 'The domestic sphere as a political site: a study of women in the Indian nationalist movement'. *Women's Studies International Forum* 20: 493-504.

Thomson, R. 2006. 'The qualitative longitudinal case history: practical, methodological and ethical reflections'. *Social Policy and Society* 6: 571-582.

Tolia-Kelly, D. 2004a. 'Locating processes of identification: studying the precipitates of re-memory through artefacts in the British Asian home'. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 29: 314-32.

Tolia-Kelly, D. 2004b. 'Materializing post-colonial geographies: examining the textural landscapes of migration in the South Asian home'. *Geoforum* 35: 675-688.

Turki, F. 1981. 'Meaning in Palestinian History: Text and Context' *Arab Studies Quarterly* 3: 371-383.

Turki, F. 1988. 'The dream of diaspora Palestinians' *Middle East International* 331: 18.

Valentine, G. 1993. '(Hetero)sexing space: lesbian perceptions and experiences of everyday spaces'. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 11: 395-413.

Valentine, G. 1999. 'Doing household research: interviewing couples together and apart'. *AREA* 31: 67-74.

Valentine, G. 2008. 'The ties that bind: towards geographies of intimacy'. *Geography Compass* 2: 2097-2110.

Valentine, G., Sporton, D. and Nielsen, K. B. 2008. 'Language use on the move: sites of encounter, identities and belonging'. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 33: 376-387.

Van Hear, N. 1998. *New Diasporas: The Mass Exodus, Dispersal and Regrouping of Migrant Communities*. London: UCL Press.

Varley, A. 2008. 'A place like this? Stories of dementia, home and the self' *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 26: 47-67.

Varley, A. and Blasco, M. 2001. 'Exiled to the home: masculinity and ageing in urban Mexico'. *European Journal of Development Research* 12: 115-38.

Vertovec, S. 2004. 'Cheap calls: the social glue of migrant transnationalism'. *Global Networks* 4: 219-224.

Wagner, L. (forthcoming) *Negotiating Diasporic Mobilities and Becomings: Interactions and Practices of Europeans of Moroccan Descent on Holiday in Morocco*. PhD thesis, University College London.

Walter, B. 2001. *Outsiders Inside: Whiteness, Place, and Irish Women*. London: Routledge.

Walton-Roberts, M. and Pratt, G. 2005. 'Mobile modernities: A South Asian family negotiates immigration, gender and class in Canada'. *Gender, Place and Culture* 12: 173-195.

Waters, J. L. 2002. 'Flexible families? "Astronaut" households and the experiences of lone mothers in Vancouver, British Columbia'. *Social and Cultural Geography* 3: 117-134.

Weizmann, E. 2007. *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation*. London: Verso.

Wilding, R. 2006. '"Virtual" intimacies? Families communicating across transnational contexts'. *Global Networks* 6: 125-142.

Wilkinson, S. 2004. 'Focus group research'. In Silverman, D. (ed) *Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice*. Second Edition. London: Sage, pp 177-199.

Winchester, H. P. M. 2000. 'Qualitative research and its place in human geography'. In Hay, I. (ed) *Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography*. Oxford: Open University Press, pp 1-22.

Young, I. M. 1990. *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Young, I. M. 1997. *Intersecting Voices: Dilemmas of Gender, Political Philosophy and Policy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Young, R. J. C. 1995. *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*. London and New York, NY: Routledge.

Yuval-Davis, N. 1997. *Gender and Nation*. London: Sage.

Zerubavel, Y. 1995. *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition*. Chicago, IL and London: University of Chicago Press.

Websites

Palestine Remembered www.palestineremembered.com

United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) www.un.org/unrwa

Other sources

Birzeit University. 1999. *Colloquial Arabic I*. Birzeit: Birzeit University.

Zwick J. 2002. *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*. Los Angeles, CA: Gold Circle Films.